SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

TIME

THE NEW AMERICAN ADDICTION

HOW JUUL HOOKED KIDS AND IGNITED A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

BY JAMIE DUCHARME

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French President Emmanuel Macron leads a meeting at the Élysée Palace in Paris on Sept. 9

Photograph by Christopher Anderson—Magnum Photos for TIME

ON THE COVER: *Photograph by Jamie Chung for TIME*

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Conversation

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ...

HOW EARTH SURVIVED TIME's Sept. 23 special issue on climate change took a hard look at what the world could be like in 30 years—and young readers like Gabrielle Prince, a 17-year-old in Lancaster, N.Y., felt the urgency of that date. She started her school's Environmental Action Club but felt her "feet turning cold" as this month's climate strike neared, until she was "assured" by former Vice President Al Gore's essay encouraging youth activism. "He wrote of my heavy burden. I cried on my living room couch," Prince wrote. "His words could not have reached me at a better time." And young people weren't the only ones concerned. Joan Rose of Seal Beach, Calif., wrote that she won't be alive in 2050 but worries that "if we continue to drag our feet, my grandkids and great-grandkids will suffer."

Patricia Faloon of Pittsburgh said her copy of the issue is now next to her Bible, "encouraging me and others to 'do the right thing.'" But some readers, like Christopher P.S. Williams of Portland, Ore., felt it didn't dive deeply enough into certain key issues, such as overpopulation and farmland use.

> ***'We want more green in our pockets at the expense of a green world.'***
>
> **HERBERT HAND,** Cordova, Tenn.

Others, like David Boleneus of Spokane, Wash., were still unconvinced about the harms of runaway climate change, arguing that "an apocalypse is not coming." For David Gross of Morganville, N.J., however, the end of the world wasn't the question: "The Earth will survive," he wrote. "The question is, will humanity?"

> ***'Species come and go all through this little planet's history and so will the human species.'***
>
> **RICHARD J. QUIST,** Estero, Fla.

COMING SOON TIME Studios has announced that *Paradise Without People*—a feature-length documentary that builds on TIME's Emmy Award–nominated reporting on the global refugee crisis—will premiere in October at the Woodstock Film Festival in Woodstock, N.Y. Directed by Francesca Trianni, the film follows two young Syrian women who give birth in the same Greek hospital, as they and their families learn how much an asylum seeker's fate can depend on luck. Find out more about additional screening locations at **time.com/paradisewithoutpeople**

INSPIRED BY *TIME* At New York Fashion Week, designer Prabal Gurung showcased a new collection inspired by TIME's "Who Gets to Be American?" cover, from autumn of last year, illustrated by Hank Thomas Willis and Emily Shur. Read more: **time.com/2019-fashion-week**

QUESTION TIME When TIME for Kids' Kid Reporter Eshaan Mani covered the Sept. 12 Democratic primary debate in Houston, he scored a viral moment with a question for Senator Kamala Harris about her advice for today's youth. "Don't ever wait to ask permission to lead," she replied. "You just lead!"

bonus TIME politics

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT In the Brief (Sept. 16), we mischaracterized Iran's involvement in the war in Yemen; Iran has supported Houthi rebels there. We also misstated where NLMK USA buys steel slabs; its overseas supplier is in Russia. In the same issue, in "Trust Us," we misstated the year in which Brad Smith returned to the U.S. from Paris and how many summers he spent working on a farm; he returned in 1996 and worked on a farm for one summer.

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For the Record

‘The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets.’

BORIS JOHNSON,
U.K. Prime Minister, in a *Mail on Sunday* interview published on Sept. 14, on his determination to take his country out of the E.U. next month

190 million

Distance, in miles, to a newly discovered comet, at its closest approach to Earth; scientists believe it may be the second interstellar object ever observed in our solar system

14 days

Jail sentence handed down to Felicity Huffman on Sept. 13; the actor admitted in May to paying $15,000 in 2017 to have her older daughter’s SAT answers doctored

‘I did this for my human soul. For myself. I wanted to practice and compete with freedom, with peace of mind.’

SAEID MOLLAEI,
Iranian judo champion, in an AP interview published Sept. 16, after refusing a government directive to throw a match

$11 billion

Settlement that California utility PG&E has agreed to pay for its role in the 2017 wine-country fires and the 2018 Camp Fire, which killed 85 people

Stressed-out sheep
After a ewe was spotted in Chicago, police tracked her down

Chilled-out goats
A Florida farm attempted to break the world record for the largest goat-yoga class

‘Hell yes, we’re going to take your AR-15, your AK-47.’

BETO O’ROURKE,
presidential candidate, at the third Democratic debate on Sept. 12, describing his plan to force buybacks of assault-style weapons

‘I KNOW YOU’RE TRYING, BUT JUST NOT HARD ENOUGH. SORRY.’

GRETA THUNBERG,
Swedish climate-change activist, 16, to Democratic Senators who invited her to a forum in Washington on Sept. 17

They, themself

pronouns, used to refer to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary

Among 533 new entries Merriam-Webster added to its dictionary on Sept. 17

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SOURCES: THE MAIL ON SUNDAY; NPR; AP; UPI

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The Brief

STRIKING OIL
A satellite image shows smoke rising from an oil-processing plant in Buqyaq, Saudi Arabia, on Sept. 14

INSIDE

WHY MIGRATION REFORMERS SEE AN OPPORTUNITY IN ITALY

WHAT A BANKRUPTCY FILING MEANS FOR OPIOID LAWSUITS

HOW COKIE ROBERTS CAME TO LOVE AMERICAN POLITICS

DIPLOMACY

Iran gets tough, and Trump seeks a deal

By Brian Bennett and John Walcott

AS PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP WEIGHED how to respond to a Sept. 14 drone and missile attack on Saudi oil facilities, which temporarily cut the kingdom's output in half and roiled markets, he had several options. One, U.S. officials briefed on the White House deliberations tell TIME, was familiar: a Pentagon plan to bomb Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps targets on Persian Gulf islands. Trump was offered that plan after the Iranians shot down a U.S. Navy drone on June 20, and top advisers recommended he act on it then, but he turned it down, the officials say.

A second option was quite different. In recent weeks, Trump had pressed aides to arrange for him to talk to Iran's President Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York City at the end of September. One idea, the officials say, was to set up a moment of stagecraft when France's President Emmanuel Macron would be talking to Rouhani and, seemingly impromptu, encourage Trump, press cameras in tow, to join them. Trump went with a third option: slapping new sanctions on Iran. Now, Iran may back out of the U.N. gathering altogether.

That Trump was even considering meeting with Rouhani was remarkable. No U.S. President has met with an Iranian leader since the 1970s. Iran has upped its uranium enrichment program and increased attacks on world energy supplies and U.S. allies in the Middle East in recent months, targeting ships in and around the Gulf on May 12 and June 13. (Iran denies it was involved.) Days later, it shot down a Global Hawk surveillance drone, before allegedly hitting the world's largest oil-processing plant. Trump's desire for a meeting with Iran "is absurd at this point," says Mark Dubowitz of the hawkish Foundation for Defense of Democracies. But apparently, he says, "regardless of how destructive the regime in Iran's behavior is, that will not dissuade him."

The episode lays bare Trump's faith that he can solve the world's most challenging and dangerous conflicts, from the Middle East to Afghanistan and North Korea, with a promiscuous combination of bravado and bonhomie. But recent events have shown the costs of that approach. As Trump pursued and then called off peace talks with Afghanistan's Taliban, a series of Taliban-linked attacks killed at least 50 people this month. He continues to tout the possibility of peace with North Korea, even as Kim Jong Un tests missiles that could reach American and allied targets in the region. And the attack on Saudi oil facilities, which Trump's aides attributed to Iran even as he hedged, spiked global oil prices by more than 10%, an ominous sign for the world economy—and for a President seeking re-election.

THE IRAN CHALLENGE, to Trump's critics, is a crisis of his own making. His Administration has been headed toward confrontation with Tehran since last year, when he walked away from the 2015 deal that curtailed Iran's nuclear program, then imposed ever tighter sanctions on its oil and other exports, triggering an exodus of foreign corporations and financial institutions. Iran's oil exports have plunged to historic lows, crippling its economy. "Trump finds himself backed into a corner because for a year now he has marched down an escalatory path while insisting he doesn't want a conflict," says Jeffrey Prescott, former senior adviser on the region under President Obama. U.S. intelligence officials, who believe Iran is behind the strike, are divided over Tehran's motives. One camp has told Trump the recent attack reflects the economic pressure Iran feels and is a sign of increasing desperation. Another sees Iran's months of strikes as Tehran testing Trump.

None of which makes it easier to come up with a longer-term response to Iran's latest moves. The Pentagon has long argued against a direct military strike on the Iranian mainland for fears that could trigger a wider war. Moreover, Tehran has maintained some deniability over the attack. Two Cabinet secretaries publicly attributed the attack to Iran, and military officials told Trump as recently as Sept. 16 that "they were planned and directed by Iranian officers with the knowledge of the government," says a defense official. A Saudi military spokesman said debris showed Iran "unquestionably sponsored" the strikes. But the U.S. and its allies reportedly failed to track the incoming projectiles, apparently because they were advanced cruise missiles and low-flying drones.

'Trump finds himself backed into a corner.'

JEFFREY PRESCOTT, former senior adviser on the region

Diplomacy offers its own problems. Macron is pushing a plan to create a $15 billion line of credit for Iran, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has backed it, says a U.S. official briefed on the discussions. But Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the official says, has argued that easing pressure on Iran before it makes concessions on its nuclear program or reduces its use of proxy forces in the region would be dangerous, as it would reward that behavior. And if conflict with Iran would be bad politics for Trump in an election year, making a bad deal with Iran could be worse.

The dilemma leaves him in an unusual spot, the sources familiar with White House talks say: looking for help from allies. "They want to respond, but as a group, or with allies," says a former senior Trump Administration official in contact with U.S. and Gulf officials. That response will test Trump's seemingly conflicting impulses, to look tough and to get the U.S. out of conflicts. —*With reporting by* KIM DOZIER *and* W.J. HENNIGAN/WASHINGTON

PREVIOUS PAGE: PLANET LABS INC./AP; THESE PAGES: TRUMP: GETTY IMAGES; MUGABE: ZINYANGE AUNTONY—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

STRONGMAN'S END Pallbearers carry the coffin of Robert Mugabe, the former President of Zimbabwe, from his sparsely attended state funeral in Harare on Sept. 14. Mugabe, who was removed from power by a coup in 2017 after 37 years as President, died on Sept. 6 at 95. The tenure of Mugabe, once hailed as an anticolonial revolutionary, was marked by economic mismanagement and fraudulent elections that left Zimbabwe deeply impoverished.

THE BULLETIN

With the far right out of power in Italy, the E.U. edges toward migration reform

AFTER SIX DAYS AT SEA ON SEPT. 14, THE *Ocean Viking* sailed into port carrying 82 asylum seekers. It was the first rescue ship to dock in Italy since Matteo Salvini, one of Europe's most fervent antimigrant politicians, lost his job as Interior Minister. He had shut Italian ports to rescue ships like the *Ocean Viking*, but his coalition government collapsed in August over the direction of migration policy. On Sept. 10 a new coalition took office without his far-right League party. "This is the end of Salvini's propaganda," a new minister tweeted.

DEADLY PASSAGE After becoming Interior Minister in June 2018, Salvini threatened fines of up to €1 million and human-smuggling charges for captains who defied his migrant-entry ban. It had the desired effect: arrivals have fallen to around 6,200 so far in 2019, down from over 20,000 in the same period in 2018. But it also made the journey deadlier; for every 10 migrants who arrived in Italy by sea this year, one has died en route. That's roughly double the 2018 rate.

SEA CHANGE With Salvini gone, reformers in Italy and Brussels see a chance to act. Their focus is on the E.U.'s so-called Dublin regulation, which forces migrants to apply for asylum in the first member state where they set foot. Since 2014, more than 600,000 have arrived in Italy. Moderates say the burden on Italy helped Salvini's antimigrant populism to flourish. "The Dublin regulation must be modified," said Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on Sept. 10.

SHARED BURDEN For now, more piecemeal reforms may have to do. As the *Ocean Viking* prepared to dock, France, Germany and other E.U. countries agreed to share in relocating those on board. But a long-term solution has yet to be agreed upon. On Sept. 23, E.U. Interior Ministers are meeting to decide how to deal with future ships. Germany said it was ready to accept 25% of all arrivals. But the window to act might not last long. Salvini is still hugely popular in Italy and is the favorite to win an election, if the new coalition is unable to govern. —BILLY PERRIGO

NEWS TICKER

Forest fires spread across Indonesia

Forest fires burned across the islands of Borneo and Sumatra on Sept. 17, **disrupting flights and choking nearby cities with air pollution.** The fires—the worst in years, thanks to a long dry season—threaten the habitats of endangered species including orangutans.

Trump repeals clean-water regulation

The Trump Administration **announced the repeal of the Waters of the United States rule** on Sept. 12. The Obama-era rule, the latest of many environmental regulations reversed or weakened under Trump, limited the use of environmentally damaging chemicals near bodies of water like wetlands and streams.

Snowden: 'I want to come home'

Edward Snowden, who has been **living in Russia since revealing details of NSA surveillance** in 2013, said he wants to come back to the U.S. but doesn't believe he'd get a fair trial. On Sept. 17, the U.S. filed suit against the whistle-blower, saying his new memoir violates nondisclosure agreements.

A NEW APPROACH TO HER NEXT CHAPTER

YVONNE CAVANAUGH'S RETIREMENT PRIORITIES INCLUDE STAYING HEALTHY SO SHE CAN INDULGE HER LOVE OF TRAVEL

BlueCross BlueShield MEDICARE & TIME

When Yvonne Cavanaugh, 60, retired nearly three years ago, she finally had something she'd lacked in the past: free time for traveling and exploring. Raising two kids as a single mother and working long hours as an office manager for a large law firm had left little time for personal pursuits. But these days, her children are grown and Yvonne has more time to travel with her husband, John, an old friend whom she recently married after reconnecting nearly a decade ago.

She and John have taken cruises to Belize and Mexico, driven their motorhome to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and explored the U.S Virgin Islands. "When we travel, it's all outdoors and food for us," Yvonne says. "We plan our trip, research the destination, and then hit the ground running every morning."

Knowing in advance what sights to see helps Yvonne and John get the most out of their trip. Most recently, the couple spent two weeks on a road trip around Ireland, touring destinations such as Blarney Castle and the majestic Cliffs of Moher. They tried different restaurants every night and savored the seafood—and the locally brewed stouts. Yvonne had planned the trip as a birthday present for John, and spent months mapping out their itinerary with the help of an Irish travel agent. "It was one of the coolest places I've ever been," says Yvonne. "We loved the history behind it all."

After returning home, Yvonne started suffering intense pain in her wrists and hands—and worried the discomfort would mean scaling back her travel plans. Yvonne was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome, but fortunately, acupuncture and other treatments helped reduce the sharp pain and swelling in her hands. "Once the pain was gone, I told myself that I didn't ever want it to come back."

Thanks to the care she had access to through her Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage, she learned to manage her symptoms, which lets her spend more time thinking about her next trip—and where she and John will eat. "We want to go to Greece," she says. "Mediterranean food is my absolute favorite." After taking her health into her own hands, Yvonne is ready to keep exploring.

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NEWS TICKER

Judge blocks Confederate statue removal

A judge in Virginia issued a ruling Sept. 13 that **blocks attempts to take down a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville,** saying to do so would violate the state's law on historic preservation. The statue sparked the protests that turned deadly there in 2017.

Israeli election ends in deadlock

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced an uncertain future after an election on Sept. 17 in which **no clear winner emerged, paving the way for a long process of coalition formation.** Netanyahu's Likud party trailed rivals Blue and White by one seat, as of Sept. 18—though both were well short of the 61-seat majority needed to govern.

Trump picks new National Security Adviser

President Trump named Robert O'Brien, who had been serving as special envoy for hostage affairs at the State Department, **as the fourth National Security Adviser of his presidency,** on Sept. 18, following John Bolton's departure. O'Brien also served in the Bush and Obama Administrations.

GOOD QUESTION

What will Purdue's bankruptcy filing do to opioid lawsuits?

WHEN PURDUE PHARMA ANNOUNCED ON Sept. 15 that it had reached a possible settlement in a major federal case involving America's opioid crisis, the embattled pharmaceutical company shared other news too: that as part of the proposed deal, it had filed for bankruptcy. But those announcements are unlikely to spell a resolution for the lawsuits facing Purdue, which is accused of contributing to the public-health crisis by using deceptive marketing practices to promote its prescription painkiller OxyContin.

Purdue has been sued in various courts over OxyContin, but central to the new developments is one major federal case before an Ohio judge, involving some 1,600 consolidated lawsuits from across the country. The company—which did not admit to any wrongdoing—said in a statement that it had reached the possible settlement with members of the plaintiffs' counsel, in addition to more than 20 state attorneys general. The deal remains tentative and controversial, but on Sept. 16, the judge overseeing the case removed Purdue as a defendant.

"This settlement framework avoids wasting hundreds of millions of dollars and years on protracted litigation, and instead will provide billions of dollars and critical resources to communities across the country trying to cope with the opioid crisis," said Steve Miller, chairman of Purdue's board of directors, in an emailed statement to TIME. The deal is "estimated to provide more than $10 billion of value to address the opioid crisis."

However, attorneys general from at least 24 states and the District of Columbia have already rejected Purdue's deal, according to the Associated Press. They say the bankruptcy filing is a way for the Sackler family—which owns the company and has agreed to pay "a minimum of $3 billion" under the proposed settlement—to evade financial responsibility. It should also prevent new lawsuits. Massachusetts attorney general Maura Healey said at a press conference on Sept. 16 that the deal "is not going to require the Sacklers to pay back any of the profits they took out of Purdue from sales of OxyContin over the last many years. Not a dime."

"I don't think it's a surprise to anybody" that Purdue filed for bankruptcy, Abbe Gluck, a Yale law professor and the faculty director of the Solomon Center for Health Law and Policy, tells TIME. There had long been concerns the company "just did not have enough money" to go around, she explains. But whether a bankruptcy proceeding can fully dispose of Purdue's total financial liability will only become clearer as the case unfolds, she says, and the bankruptcy court weighs in on whether the states unhappy with Purdue's deal can still sue in their own state courts.

In the meantime, the crisis at the heart of the cases continues. From 1999 to 2017, almost 400,000 people died from an overdose involving an opioid. —SANYA MANSOOR

CRIME

Gold and gone

A **toilet made of 18-karat gold**—a work titled *America,* by the Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, worth an estimated $1 million—was stolen from the U.K.'s Blenheim Palace, where it was on exhibition, on Sept. 14. Here, other gold nonstandard theft. —*Rachael Bunyan*

BAD EGG
A routine checkpoint in France solved a valuable mystery in 2013, when a car was found to be carrying a golden egg worth about $1.3 million—which had gone missing in Switzerland four years earlier.

HEAVY BREAD
A gold loaf of bread became a symbol of Ukraine's revolution in 2014, when it was found by protesters storming the mansion of then President Viktor Yanukovych. In 2015, the new government said it was stolen.

SOUND THE ALARM
Hours after flutist Samuel Coles played Schubert's Ninth Symphony at London's Royal Festival Hall in 2015, his golden flute, then worth about $76,000, was stolen from the bar where he was celebrating.

DIED

Cokie Roberts

The voice of D.C.

By Walter Isaacson

GROWING UP IN BOTH WASHington, D.C., and New Orleans, Cokie Roberts—who died on Sept. 17 at 75—developed a love for politics, a wry humor about its lovable rogues and a reverence for its institutions. She was born Mary Martha Corinne Morrison Claiborne Boggs; her last three names connected her to political dynasties that included the first governor of Louisiana, a New Orleans mayor and her father, who was U.S. House majority leader when she was young. "Because I spent time in the Capitol and particularly in the House of Representatives, I became deeply committed to the American system," she said. "And as close up and as personally as I saw it and saw all of the flaws, I understood all of the glories of it."

With her bourbon-cured drawl and common-sense insights, she was a voice of reason in political journalism for NPR and ABC. An inspiring historical storyteller, she wrote engaging books chronicling the colorful women who helped shape America. Most important, with her ready laugh and way of saying "darling"—which she learned from her mother, who also served in Congress—she was simply a good person, filled with love for those around her and for the institutions of her country.

Isaacson, a former editor of TIME, was an intern in the office of majority leader Hale Boggs, Roberts' father

DIED

Ric Ocasek

Rock original

RIC OCASEK DIDN'T LOOK OR SOUND MUCH LIKE THE classic conception of a rock star. He was spindly, with a lilting gait and deep-set eyes; he sang in a plaintive, reedy voice. But the songwriter and lead singer of the Cars, who died on Sept. 15 at 75, didn't particularly care for conventions. Indeed, he spent his career tweaking and then reinventing them.

The Cars, formed by Ocasek and Benjamin Orr, broke out of Boston's music scene in the late 1970s and helped define a movement that would become known as new wave, integrating rock's pugnacious past with its synthetic future. Songs like "Just What I Needed," "Drive" and "Let's Go" united fans of punk, college rock and mainstream pop alike. As the band receded from prominence, Ocasek shepherded a new generation of rockers to the fore by producing artists like Weezer, Nada Surf and No Doubt. In 2018, he and the Cars were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Ocasek might not have been what was expected—but time and time again, he was just what was needed. —ANDREW R. CHOW

Ocasek, seen here around 1980, also dabbled in painting, poetry and comedy

DIED

Juanita Abernathy

Activist's activist

By Rev. Al Sharpton

JUANITA ABERNATHY used to say she'd known me since I was a little boy, before I got "controversial and famous." I joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference when I was 13, shortly after Martin Luther King Jr. was killed. Ralph Abernathy succeeded him as president, and Juanita, who died on Sept. 12 at 88, was its First Lady.

When Dr. King was new in Montgomery, Ala., Juanita had become the support system for the King family. When Dr. King's house was bombed after the bus boycott, the Abernathy house was bombed too. Juanita was the backbone of that family, and that family was the backbone of the civil rights movement. She was at the marches; she was at the rallies; she spoke to women in the churches about what needed to be done. Unlike her husband and Dr. King, she didn't get the credit she deserved, but she was a pivotal part of the movement.

Sharpton is host of *PoliticsNation* and president of the National Action Network

TOILET: LEON NEAL—GETTY IMAGES; ROBERTS: HEIDI GUTMAN—GETTY IMAGES; OCASEK: LYNN GOLDSMITH—GETTY IMAGES; ABERNATHY—AP

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— Men's Journal

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In the early 1930s watch manufacturers took a clue from Henry Ford's favorite quote concerning his automobiles, "You can have any color as long as it is black." Black dialed watches became the rage especially with pilots and race drivers. Of course, since the black dial went well with a black tuxedo, the adventurer's black dial watch easily moved from the airplane hangar to dancing at the nightclub. Now, Stauer brings back the "Noire", a design based on an elegant timepiece built in 1936. Black dialed, complex automatics from the 1930s have recently hit new heights at auction. One was sold for in excess of $600,000. We thought that you might like to have an affordable version that will be much more accurate than the original.

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As corporate America booms, workers demand their fair share

By Alana Semuels

THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAS LONG BEEN STRUGgling in the U.S., as fewer workers join unions and as high-profile organizing drives, like a June attempt to unionize Volkswagen employees in Tennessee, fall short.

But American workers, feeling left behind as the economy grows around them, are joining together to demand a bigger slice of the pie. On Sept. 16, 50,000 General Motors workers walked off the job in their first strike since 2007, protesting idled plants and low wages. Nearly 8,000 Marriott workers went on strike in eight cities last year, while 31,000 supermarket employees in the Northeast did the same in early 2019. In the past year, tens of thousands of teachers walked out of their classrooms to demand better pay and funding. In all, nearly half a million workers participated in strikes and work stoppages last year, the most since 1986. The labor disruptions show no sign of abating; over 80,000 Kaiser Permanente workers in six states say they are walking out for a week starting on Oct. 14 in what would be the largest American strike since 2000.

The recent labor unrest is in part fueled by uneven economic growth. While companies are prospering and the stock market hovers near all-time highs, the benefits haven't been felt by many workers, who are often stuck in temporary jobs with no benefits.

PARADOXICALLY, THE STRONG ECONOMY also emboldens workers. For a long time, the memory of the Great Recession made many afraid to jeopardize their jobs. But today there are more than 7 million job openings in the U.S., compared with just 2.2 million a decade ago, according to government data. When more jobs are available and unemployment is low, people feel more confident in demanding better pay and benefits. "Workers are tired and frustrated and angry with stagnant wages and job insecurity, and in a tight labor market they are gaining the confidence to do something about it," says Harley Shaiken, a University of California, Berkeley, professor who studies labor. The number of workers voluntarily quitting their jobs is at its highest level in decades. "Fire me, and I'll find another job somewhere else," says Tracy Pease, a Detroit-area waitress who recently testified in front of the Michigan statehouse advocating for a higher tipped minimum wage.

Many nonunion workers also want change. Those in the gig economy, many of whom are considered independent contractors and thus not eligible to unionize or receive benefits, have been demanding higher pay and steadier hours. "The economy is going back up for people that are buying the $72 million homes, it's not going back up for people like me," says Mia Kelly, a former Instacart driver who now helps organize protests through a campaign called PayUp. Kelly and other gig workers handed out peanuts at Postmates' Bellevue, Wash., offices earlier in September to protest declining pay; some have also testified before lawmakers. Legislators have paid attention: on Sept. 11, California passed a landmark bill that could make it harder for companies like Postmates to classify workers as independent contractors.

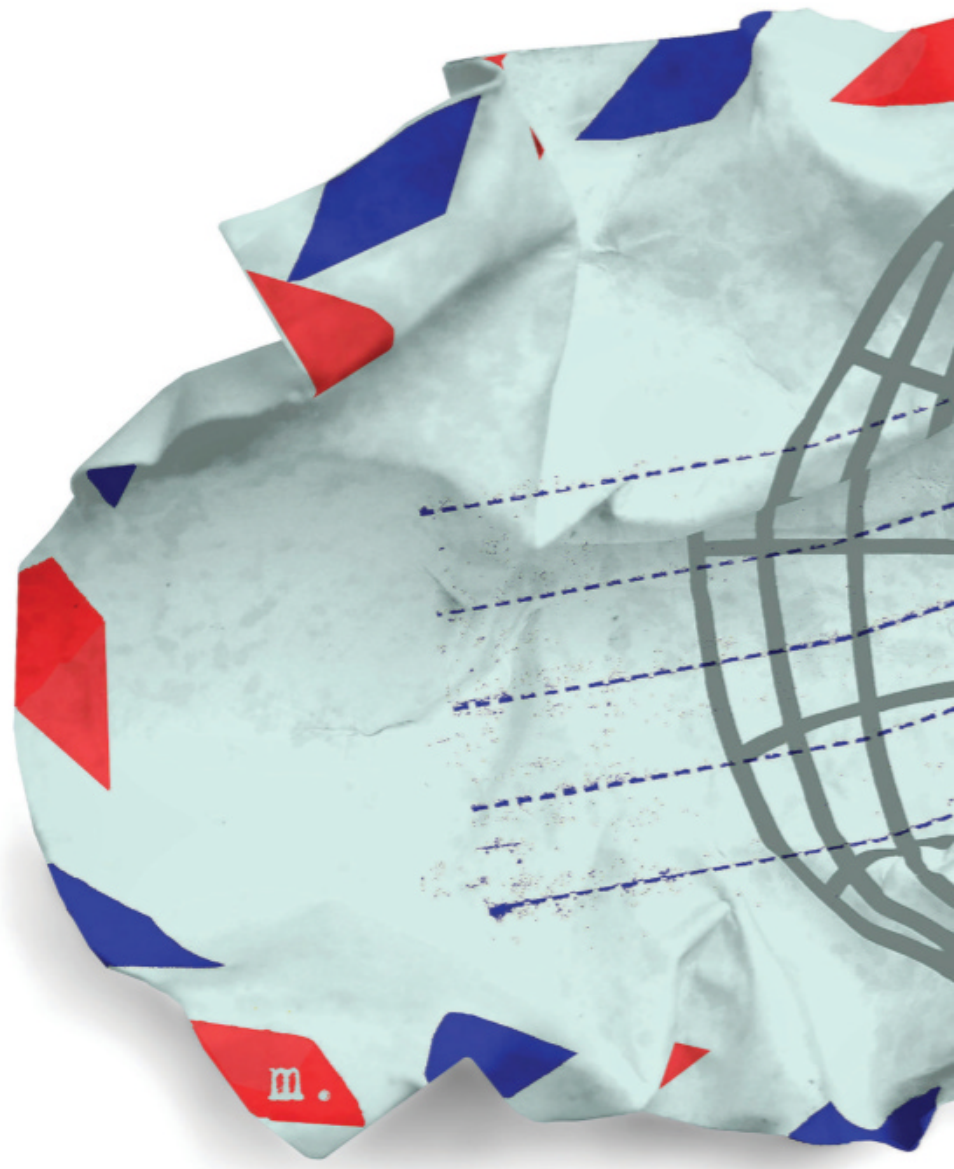
While the GM walkout and similar large-scale strikes are getting plenty of attention, only 10.5% of the country's workforce was unionized as of last year, an all-time low. That's in part because a strong economy can inhibit unionization. Gary Chaison, a professor emeritus of labor relations at Clark University, says workers who are doing better than they were a few years ago are often skeptical that unions will do any good. But Chaison argues those are often the same workers who could most benefit from the safety net that unions can offer if and when the economy starts to sour. That may happen sooner than later. In August, the stock market plunged after the yield curve, a closely watched economic indicator that has predicted past recessions, hinted at an upcoming downturn, spooking investors into a sell-off. "That's the irony of the situation—as things become worse, there's more of a need for collectivism," says Chaison. ☐

Union supporters protest outside of the General Motors Flint Assembly plant on Sept. 16 in Flint, Mich.

JAKE MAY—THE FLINT JOURNAL/AP

Will Trump pull out of the world's mail system?

By Abigail Abrams



AS AN AMERICAN, JEANNE GLENZ PRIZES HER RIGHT TO VOTE. But, because she lives near Munich with her German husband, exercising that right isn't always easy.

This year it could get even harder, depending on the results of an obscure international meeting scheduled to take place in Geneva on Sept. 24–25. If the Trump Administration doesn't get what it wants at that summit, the U.S. is set to withdraw from an arcane treaty that governs global mail delivery—leaving commercial shippers and military mail managers fretting, and election officials concerned that millions of overseas Americans will struggle to cast a vote. "This represents taxation without representation," says Glenz, a 79-year-old retired psychologist from California.

The White House says it's working "around the clock" to facilitate a smooth exit from the agreement, if it comes to that, but the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has telegraphed a more cautious outlook in industry conversations. With few details made public, mail watchers worry the U.S. may be about to upset the stability of the mail system around the world.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM isn't perfect—a letter may get lost; a gift may arrive the day after a birthday—but it's still an impressive bit of international cooperation. After all, if you want to send a letter from the U.S. to Glenz in Germany, you can use American stamps and still expect Deutsche Post to deliver it.

That's thanks to the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a 144-year-old organization that sets technical and security standards to keep international mail and small packages moving around the globe. Now part of the U.N., it's the second oldest international organization in the world, and not typically involved in high-profile disputes. But one part of the arrangement has drawn President Donald Trump's ire: "terminal dues," the rates the 192 member countries pay one another to deliver mail across borders. The fees were developed in the 1960s based on factors including a nation's economic development at that point, so countries like China are still heavily subsidized.

"What's really made this a disastrous system is that in the last 10 years or so, international document volume has plummeted and international e-commerce has boomed," says James Campbell, a lawyer and UPU expert. "The United States and the Europeans have been flooded with e-commerce goods that come from China and other countries. We are delivering those goods at terminal-dues rates that are substantially less than what the Postal Service charges domestic mailers for the same service."

This discounted shipping cost industrialized nations $2.1 billion in 2014, per a study cited by the USPS. Trump, who has long complained about trade imbalances and NATO spending, called this discrepancy "discriminatory" before announcing last October that he intended to leave the UPU. Though his was not a new complaint, the decision to quit the group outright was, like many Trump Administration actions, a surprise. But the withdrawal process takes a year, and the State Department says the U.S. will stay put if allowed to set its own terminal-dues rates.

'It looks like Trump is having his own Brexit. It could be an absolute free-for-all.'

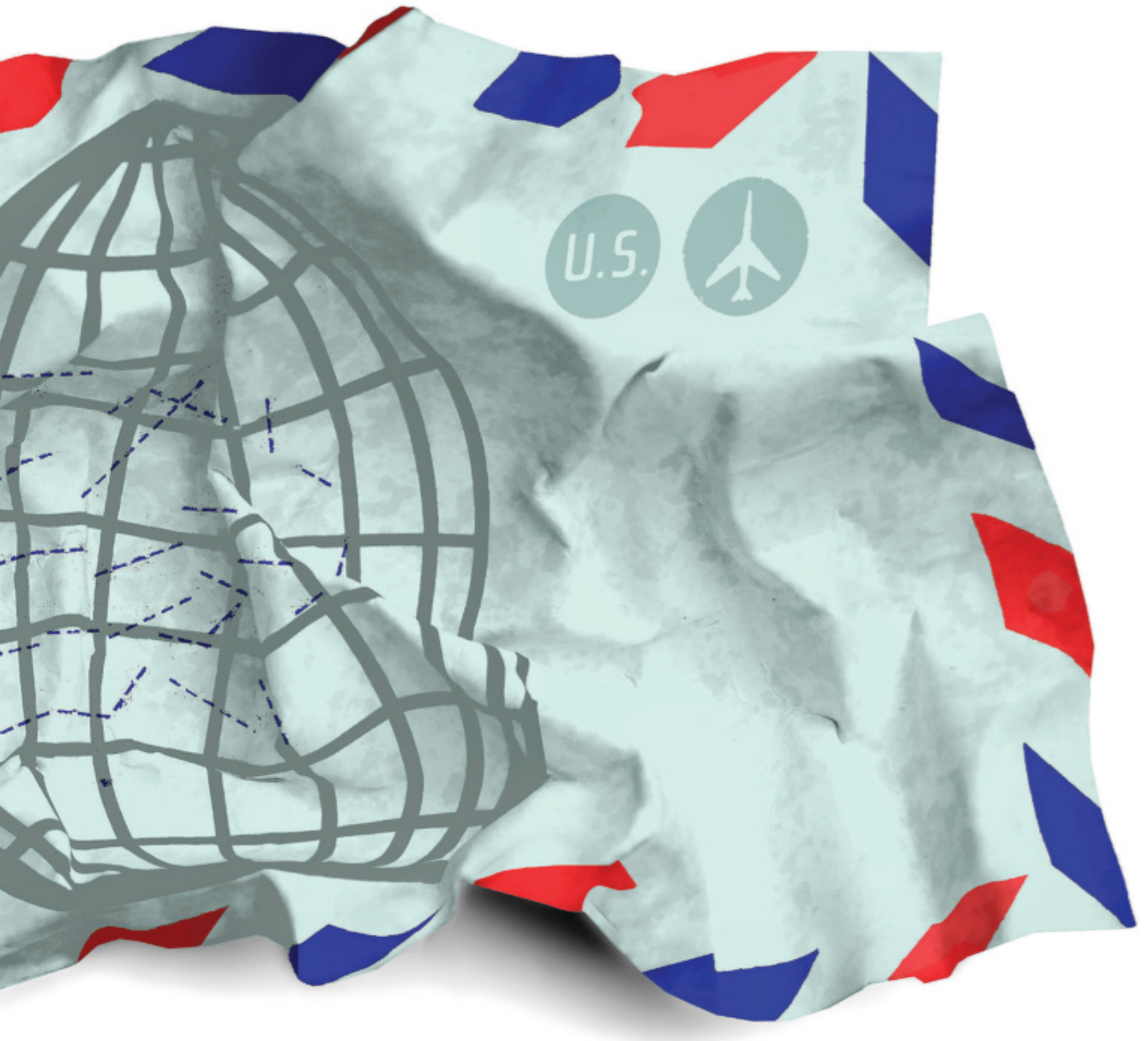
DAVID JINKS, head of consumer research at ParcelHero, on the U.S. leaving the UPU

The clock is ticking: the September meeting is the last real chance to strike a deal. There, members will consider several proposals. Option A offers few changes. Option B lets countries decide rates, up to the amount they charge for domestic mail, starting in 2020. Option C would allow them to move toward setting rates but at set ceiling increases until 2025. The proposals aren't public, but documents seen by TIME show the U.S. proposed an amendment to Option C that would let it self-declare in 2020 while leaving other nations with a longer transition.

U.S. officials say other member states appear to be listening, but its patience is limited. "We are doing everything possible to make sure one of two things happen: either we get a vote at the [meeting] that gives us immediate self-declared rates," top White House trade adviser Peter Navarro tells TIME, "or we seamlessly exit the UPU."

Those in the mail industry aren't sure about the seamless part. "It looks like Trump is having his own Brexit," says David Jinks, head of consumer research

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MAGEE FOR TIME



at the U.K.-based courier company ParcelHero. "It could be an absolute free-for-all, and every country will have to fight its corner and set its own rates."

FOR NOW, there's widespread disagreement about what will happen if the U.S. withdraws without new bilateral postal agreements in place. Major trade partners are unlikely to refuse to deliver American mail, but a spokesperson for the European Commission said withdrawal could have a "significant impact" on customs treatment of mail from the U.S. bound for the European Union. Mere confusion could leave letters languishing in foreign post offices.

Major business groups are eager for the reform the Administration is pushing, but many are wary of the upheaval of fully withdrawing from the UPU. For U.S. troops, mail is handled by the Military Postal Service Agency, so it should be largely unaffected—but military families and contractors could be. And, as Election Day approaches, officials are unsure what to tell the estimated 3 million potential overseas voters.

Federal law guarantees them the right to vote absentee, but 19 states do not allow for electronic submission of ballots. Election experts worry that overseas voters might be left paying high prices for private carriers to deliver their votes, especially in state and local races, which aren't covered by the guarantee that the federal government will cover postage for their ballots. "That's tantamount to a poll tax," said a Democratic aide to the House Administration Committee, which has been looking into mitigating fallout from a withdrawal.

There won't be much time to iron out the kinks, with 2020 primaries just months away and several states holding important elections this November. Ballots are usually sent to overseas and military voters 45 days before Election Day. This year, that's Sept. 21—three days before the UPU meeting in Switzerland.

"It's uncertain what's actually going to happen until ballots are already in the hands of the voters," says Keith Ingram, president of the National Association of State Election Directors.

The White House and State Department declined to answer specific questions on how military and election mail would be handled in the event of withdrawal, but Navarro said that there would be no "interruption" for overseas voters or troops, thanks to preparations that began as soon as Trump announced his intention last fall, and that there would be "no additional cost" for overseas voters in the event of an exit. The Postal Service also declined to answer detailed questions about its preparations but said it was making "parallel efforts to ensure the continued exchange of international mail items."

Yet despite the confidence projected by the Trump Administration, the Postal Service warned the mailing industry in a June presentation in Washington that it would likely see changes to its "geographic coverage" if the U.S. pulled out, according to presentation materials and recordings obtained by TIME. The USPS and the Federal Voting Assistance Program, the Defense Department office that helps manage overseas voting, told election officials at a conference in August that the U.S. was focused on establishing agreements to ensure that mail delivery continues with 17 priority nations, according to Tammy Patrick, a senior adviser at the Democracy Fund who serves as the USPS liaison for the National Association of Election Officials.

Those countries are expected to cover about 70% of Americans abroad. That means more than 1 in 4 U.S. citizens living overseas could be in a country with no agreement facilitating mail between them and the U.S.

The State Department said it's "ready and eager to constructively engage with other reform-minded partners" at the meeting in Geneva, but emphasized the U.S. would achieve its goal of setting its own rates "whatever the outcome" of the meeting. In either case, the once quiet world of international mail may be quiet no longer.

For Glenz, the uncertainty has made her more eager than ever to get her ballot in the mail. "The ability to vote is the cornerstone of a democracy," she says from Germany. "This is my one tiny golden hammer, and I'm not giving it up." —*With reporting by* MADELINE ROACHE/LONDON

Oscar-winning producer **Brian Grazer** would love to talk to pretty much all of us face-to-face

By Jeffrey Kluger

BRIAN GRAZER LIKES TO TELL THE STORY ABOUT the time he didn't meet Vladimir Putin. *Not* meeting Putin is a story nearly all of us could tell, but Grazer came closer than most, right into the anteroom of the Russian President's office, in fact.

Grazer—producer and founding partner, along with friend and director Ron Howard, of Imagine Entertainment—had gone to Moscow for one of what he has dubbed his "curiosity conversations," which are pretty much just what they sound like. You may be one of the great power players in Hollywood, responsible for such cinematic classics as *A Beautiful Mind* and *Splash,* and such TV hits as *Arrested Development* and *Friday Night Lights,* but that doesn't mean you know everything. So Grazer tries to sit down with accomplished people and simply ask them questions. "I lay out the ground rules," he says, "and basically I say, 'I'm going to research you; it's not going to be hard. This won't be your worst date.'"

Of course, "accomplished people" doesn't have to mean nice people, and Putin was always high on Grazer's wish list. In 2016 he got his shot, when friends in Hollywood connected him with friends in Russia who threaded the Kremlin needles and got him his audience. But, as Grazer recounts in his new book *Face to Face: The Art of Human Connection,* it all came apart in the final seconds, when he was about to be ushered into Putin's presence and his Kremlin handler explained to the press secretary what the purpose of the meeting was.

"We are here because Brian loves our country," the escort explained. "He would like to do a film about our President. He feels as if for 20 years, people in the West have been misled about what happens in Russia, which he loves."

Grazer gaped. "That is absolutely not true," he said. "I have no intention of ever making a movie about President Putin. I came here simply to meet the President." By immediate and mutual agreement, the meeting was scuttled, and today, Grazer tells the story with a measure of regret.

"Sometimes in your blind passion of wanting something to happen, you ignore cues," he said when I met him for coffee at his hotel during his recent working visit to New York. "You go ahead and do it anyway and it ends up bad. This was like a Hitchcock movie."

I can't pretend I come to the topic of Grazer with anything like pure objectivity. I worked closely with him and Howard during the production of *Apollo 13,* which was based on the book I co-authored with mission commander Jim Lovell—and I loved getting to know those guys. But in exchange for my lost detachment, I got a close-up look at how one of Hollywood's most prolific production tandems works.

Since its founding in 1986, Imagine has earned nominations for 43 Academy Awards and 196 Emmys for its movies and TV shows. In 2016, the company ended its production deal with Universal Studios and is now producing its own content in multiple genres across multiple platforms, while keeping a foot in traditional movie and TV production.

A big part of the team's success and the kind of work they produce is a certain lack of pretense, an unembarrassed ingenuousness that is captured in the entertaining life lessons that fill *Face to Face.* Grazer came to Hollywood by way of a zigzag academic route, majoring in psychology at the University of Southern California, switching to cinema and television, then graduating and spending a year in law school before starting in TV production. But it's the psych-major part of him that may have the most influence on his work.

"I'm interested in the hows and whys of human communication," he says. "Hollywood is 1,000% that—almost more than talent. There are agents who only say good things because they know it produces oxytocin."

SOME OF GRAZER'S EXPERIENCES in communication have come to him in unexpected ways. In his book, he tells a story—quite bravely, it must be said—of having a conversation with Jonas Salk, the developer of the first polio vaccine. Grazer deeply admired Salk, and worked hard to get a spot on the great man's calendar. A meeting was at last arranged, in the lobby of the Beverly Hills Hotel. Grazer spotted Salk across the room, approached him with a nervousness that quickly bloomed into full-bore panic and, when he was finally in front of him, proceeded to throw up. Salk, he writes, responded like the doctor he was, physically supporting him, asking a waiter for orange juice to boost his

GRAZER QUICK FACTS

Grandma knows
Grazer credits his grandmother with sparking his curiosity, taking him to baseball games and Hollywood Park Racetrack, where he placed (and won) his first bet.

Stay focused
When they were in their 20s, Howard taught Grazer the value of looking people in the eye. After a meeting with two writers, he told him, "If you don't look at them when they're talking, it hurts their feelings."

Laid-back leader
Of the Presidents Grazer has met, George W. Bush especially impressed him as "fully present" and "unpretentious."

PEYTON FULFORD—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

blood sugar and helping him clean up.

"I mean, it's kind of the most embarrassing thing that could happen," Grazer says. "But he probably thought, 'Wow this guy really cares.' I think that moment made him really engage." Engage a lot. After their initial, messily brief meeting, they scheduled a later, eight-hour curiosity conversation at Grazer's home that also included George Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

It's that embrace of human fallibility and vulnerability that is at the core of so many of the most memorable characters in the stories Imagine tells: the Nobel laureate who can master math but not his own mind, the astronaut who is denied his only chance at a lunar landing. (Grazer writes about the 1996 Oscars ceremony at which *Apollo 13*, nominated for Best Picture, lost. Lovell, two seats away from him, reached over and clasped his arm. "It's O.K.," he said, "I didn't make it to the moon either.")

One of Grazer's favorite insights in *Face to Face* belongs not to him, but to Oprah Winfrey, who has interviewed thousands of people in her career, and found that nearly all of them—Presidents, royalty, billionaires—have the same question when the camera goes off: "Was that O.K.?" No matter who we are, we want to please and we carry that innate, even sweet fear that we're failing to please. "It means you care," Grazer says, "so I'd say it's a good thing."

He'll be asking "Is this O.K.?" a lot soon, as Imagine continues to expand far beyond its roots. Its new content will include more multicultural movies, pre-school TV, documentaries—like the recently released *Pavarotti* and the earlier Grammy-winning Beatles doc *Eight Days a Week*—and even podcasts and Broadway adaptations of *Parenthood* and *A Beautiful Mind*.

Grazer and Howard are 68 and 65 respectively, both keeping a teenager's pace, but the question inevitably arises of whether the partnership that has churned out nearly four decades of work is beginning to think about the body of work that will endure in the decades that will come after them. Grazer answers philosophically.

"Honestly, very honestly I just live in the present," he says. "Because we don't really know if tomorrow's happening."

He very much seems to be enjoying all of his todays. I'm put in mind of a moment several years ago, when I was seated at a table with Grazer at the annual TIME 100 Gala, the dinner at which this magazine celebrates the 100 most influential people in the world. The gala is, by any measure, a glittery affair—especially for journalists who, to be frank, don't get out all that often. But Grazer surely gets out all the time—to Oscar ceremonies, White House screenings, overseas premieres, royal audiences.

All the same, during the dinner, I spotted Grazer looking about, smiling, taking in the faces, wholly in the moment. He caught me looking, and he beamed. "This is just great!" he said. As a cradle-to-grave outlook on life, that's a pretty hard one to beat. ◻

'Hollywood is 1,000% that—almost more than talent.'

BRIAN GRAZER, co-founder, Imagine Entertainment, on human communication

LightBox

After the storm

A water-filled coffin was among the debris found on Sept. 11 in a cemetery in McLean's Town, on the island of Grand Bahama, in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian—creating an image that photographer Ramon Espinosa describes as "a very clear message of what the storm brought." After the hurricane devastated the archipelago's northern islands, leaving at least 51 people dead and thousands homeless, Bahamians faced a monumental recovery effort.

Photograph by Ramon Espinosa—AP

▸ For more of our best photography, visit time.com/lightbox

Green Revolution

Former revolutionary base becomes a model of ecological restoration

By Wen Qing

Hejiahe Village in Yanchuan County, Yan'an City, northwest China's Shaanxi Province

Liu Jin, a well-known actor lauded for playing the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in many films and TV series, travels all over China to shoot for his different roles. Yan'an, a former revolutionary base of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Shaanxi Province in the northwest, is one of his regular destinations. He went to the city on the Loess Plateau at least 10 times before 2006 and his impression was of a dry place crisscrossed by bare ravines and gullies and frequently blanketed by ferocious sandstorms.

But when he went there again last year after a long gap, he couldn't believe his eyes. Yan'an was scarcely the same city of his old memories. The once bare mountains were covered with green, turning the brown and yellow into a verdant landscape. For children born there after 2000, their hometown has been green as long as they can remember.

Behind the amazing change is two decades of a dogged large-scale afforestation drive. Since 1999, Yan'an took the lead in implementing a national reforestation project popularly known as "grain for green," a conservation initiative to reduce soil erosion and improve the degraded ecosystem in the Loess Plateau and other regions. Overexploited fields where grain was grown were allowed to lie fallow and then converted into forests. Today, Yan'an's vegetation coverage has almost doubled, from 46 percent in 2000 to 81.3 percent in 2017.

A historical necessity

"People avoided wearing white shirts in the 1990s as they would get dirty easily due to the frequent sandstorms," Tang Kuncai, a Yan'an resident in his 50s, said.

At that time, Yan'an's rugged mountains were bald, with almost no trees growing there. On windy days, the air scattered sand and dust over the city and people outside could barely open their eyes. When it rained, there were torrential downpours washing away the soil. Every year, over 200 million tons of sediments ended up in the Yellow River, contributing to nearly one sixth of the river's overall average sedimentation. The soil loss and the plateau's inability to retain water resources aggravated its aridity.

According to historical records, Yan'an was covered with forests and grass in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). However, due to intense cultivation as well as wars, this green paradise gradually turned into a barren land.

Yan'an was long in the border area with nomadic regimes. During the rule of various dynasties, the central authorities usually mobilized large numbers of people from other places to safeguard the frontier. With the increasing population, most areas were cleared to plant grains and the process of aridification began.

In the following centuries, Yan'an remained stuck in the vicious cycle of "the more land they cultivated, the more barren the land was, and the poorer the people

WANG XIANG

were." U.S. journalist Edgar Snow wrote in his seminal 1937 book *Red Star Over China*, "A peasant could own as much as 100 *mu* of land and yet be a poor man." The *mu* was an old Chinese land area measurement, equaling 667 square meters.

Yan'an became headquarters of the CPC after the end of the Long March in 1935, attracting swarms of people from across the country to the small city. International observers like Snow also arrived. The CPC reached a cooperation agreement with the Kuomintang to fight Japanese invaders, but the Kuomintang often disrupted the united front.

"Facing an economic blockade by Kuomintang troops with limited outside resources accessible, the CPC had no choice but to clear the forested land to support the local population," Li Yongdong, Deputy Director of the Forestry Bureau of Yan'an, told *Beijing Review*. "Yan'an contributed significantly to the Chinese revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China."

XINHUA

A tourist watches a beekeeper collect honey in Huanglong, a county in Yan'an, on June 3, 2018

Ecological pioneer

In 1999, while on an inspection tour of Yan'an, then Premier Zhu Rongji proposed to return the grain plots to forests.

From then on, farmers were encouraged to plant the free saplings provided by the government rather than grow grains on demarcated hillside land. The government compensated the farmers, providing subsidized grain as well as money for the reforested land.

However, it was not easy to grow trees in Yan'an's dry climate conditions. Hao Yunfeng, Deputy Director of the Forestry Bureau of Yichuan, a county in Yan'an, told *Beijing Review*. "In some cases, trees had to be replanted five or six times."

Things were even more challenging in an area of Yichuan that was part of the Yellow River Valley. If vegetation could be grown on the slopes, it could arrest soil erosion and lessen sedimentation in the river, Hao said. But the slopes were very steep and the soil layer was very thin and barren. So the saplings were transported onto the slopes using wire ropes and to improve their survival rate, were planted in stone pits specially built with additional soil so that they would retain water when it rained. The method worked. Hao pointed to the green slopes, saying, "However, we have to replant some of the trees as this year it has been very dry. But most of them survived."

Yan'an has also prohibited grazing on the mountains as the sheep tend to eat up the baby plants, even digging out the roots. "Sheep herding was one of the main income sources for many farmers," Li said. "Although they were unhappy with this prohibition, they followed it."

In 1999, there were 2 million sheep in Yan'an. At present, the number has come down to between 600,000 and 700,000. This sharp reduction has resulted in enormous long-term ecological improvement. In the past two decades, the newly created forest area crossed 1.4 million hectares.

The greening of Yan'an has also led to noticeable improvements in the weather. In the 1990s, the average annual precipitation was 350 mm. Today, it has increased to 600 mm. The soil washed into the Yellow River has decreased to 31 million tons from 258 million tons, and sandstorms have become rare.

Farmers have benefited from the initiative. According to Hao, the afforestation efforts are combined with the poverty alleviation drive. "Besides receiving subsidies, farmers are also hired by the government to plant trees in state-owned forest farms," he said. Some of them have been employed as part-time forest rangers. The growing locust tree forest, a favorite of honey bees, has led to many farmers keeping bees. "Locust flower honey has become a new name card of our city," Hao said.

The Yan'an spirit

Yan'an's remarkable afforestation success is in large part due to the efforts of its people, who showed their strength and perseverance in the face of adversity in the 1930s and 1940s.

During the blockade and acute shortage of essential items in the 1940s, the local people and the CPC-led army showed impressive production activities. Soldiers were sent to Nanniwan, an uncultivated land on the outskirts of Yan'an, to plant grains in 1941. They cleared land overgrown with thorns with primitive tools they devised themselves, slept on straw, and lived on wild plants. After three years of herculean efforts, they turned barren and uninhabited Nanniwan into the granary of the revolutionary base.

The same spirit has led to the success of the afforestation efforts. "In the last 20 years, the people of Yan'an dug over 20 billion pits to plant trees," Li said.

The financial support from the Central Government is also a critical factor. Since 1999, a total of over 20 billion yuan ($3 billion) was allocated to support Yan'an's afforestation drive. ■

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EDUCATION

LESS ELITE, MORE EQUAL

By Daniel Markovits

Harvard, Princeton and Yale boast that their incoming classes include an increasing number of students from modest backgrounds. They trumpet financial-aid programs that require zero contribution from students whose families have incomes below $65,000. But poor and middle-class students remain drops in an ocean of privilege.

INSIDE

AN ALS ACTIVIST TAKES A STAND FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH

BORIS JOHNSON TRIES ONCE MORE TO BREXIT

DO WE REALLY KNOW WHAT WE WANT IN A MATE?

In recent years, the "Ivy Plus" colleges have enrolled more students from the top 1% of the income distribution than from the bottom half. They devote vast resources to educating these already privileged students. The most selective schools spend almost eight times as much per student as the least selective ones, according to one estimate. And the modest increases in economic diversity at elite colleges are built on a model that cannot be scaled up.

Elite graduates then dominate the highest-paying jobs. Top bankers, a Wall Street ethnography observes, are recruited "only from the Ivy League and a few comparable schools like MIT and Stanford." Four-fifths of the partners at the most profitable law firm in America graduated from a "top five" law school. Elite schooling has become the dynastic technology of choice for the 1%.

Universities hope that doubling down on meritocracy will square unequal outcomes with equal opportunities, so that they can become more economically diverse without becoming less academically exclusive.

A tour group in front of Sterling Memorial Library on the Yale University campus in New Haven, Conn.

But this is a false hope. Rich parents pay for art and sports lessons, hire tutors and, critically, send their children to schools that spend many times more on educating their students than middle-class schools. Colleges and professional schools extend and increase that training gap. If the difference between what a typical one-percenter and a typical middle-class family invest in their children were put into a trust fund, to be given to the child on the death of the parents, this meritocratic inheritance would amount to a bequest of roughly $10 million per child.

Poor and middle-class children cannot compete with rich children who have absorbed all this training. And while corruption is real and outrageous, grades, test scores and other meritocratic achievements explain the bulk of elite families' dominance in admissions. The most elite schools actually do have the most accomplished students.

Common usage equates meritocracy with equality of opportunity, and outrage at elite self-dealing implicitly valorizes meritocratic ideals. But when outcomes become sufficiently unequal, opportunities also become unequal. Elite universities have assumed aristocracy's mantle, only now with a meritocratic twist.

EQUALITY REQUIRES reducing the absolute difference between what is invested in the most educated and the less educated. Elite universities must adopt a democratic model—teaching many more students, chosen on the basis of new criteria. Education must become less hierarchical and less meritocratic.

Both changes are practical. The share of Americans age 25 to 29 to get a B.A. nearly quadrupled between 1940 and 1980, but the rate of growth then slowed dramatically and has now stalled. By contrast, expenditures have kept growing, so colleges now spend much more per student than they used to, and the Ivy League spends nearly twice as much as it did just two decades ago. The top schools can afford to educate twice as many students as they do now. While a few elite colleges can retain their exclusivity while growing modestly, doubling enrollments across the board requires making top colleges less selective and less elite.

Elite universities should embrace change. When everybody wants to go to the same "best" schools, admissions processes must justify the immense inequality that they produce. Even the most powerful universities become slaves to a narrow conception of merit. In a more equal world, where people went to college would matter less and applicants would pursue different schools for different reasons. Universities could pursue whatever values they held dear, crafting admissions standards that favored community service, or academic scholarship, or a thousand other virtues. The elite would become less exclusive, but more free.

America's top universities face a stark choice between equality and eliteness. They should choose equality.

Markovits is the author of The Meritocracy Trap

SHORT READS

Highlights from stories on **time.com/ideas**

A fight for the future

Ady Barkan was 32 when he was diagnosed with ALS. In an excerpt from his memoir *Eyes to the Wind,* the progressive activist writes of trying to defeat the Republican tax bill and realizing the power the disease had given him: **"I could transcend my dying body by hitching my future to yours."**

Assessing education

Twenty years ago, after a federal court ended busing as a means of integrating schools, Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, author of *The Voting Rights War,* says our public schools are segregated once again. **"This diverse nation cannot afford to live in silos of distrust and ignorance of one another," she writes.**

Comfort food

Why was the Popeyes chicken sandwich such a phenomenon? *Drive-Thru Dreams* author Adam Chandler, who has observed the company's intensive ideation process, offers one theory: **"In the age of gimmicky, brightly colored, Instagram-friendly food items, there is also a literal and spiritual hunger for something relatable and familiar."**

YALE: CRAIG WARGA—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; QUICK TALK: GETTY IMAGES

THE RISK REPORT

Mr. Johnson goes to Brussels

By Ian Bremmer

NEWLY SELECTED British Prime Minister Boris Johnson stormed into 10 Downing Street this past summer vowing to do the impossible: secure a better deal from Brussels than the one offered to his predecessor Theresa May. Johnson threatened to pull the U.K. out of the E.U. on Oct. 31 should that deal not materialize.

Two months later, Johnson's impossible promise remains very challenging. Not only have the Europeans refused to reopen negotiations, but Johnson's move to sidestep the British Parliament by suspending it for five weeks triggered parliamentary mutiny—Johnson and his Conservative Party lost their working majority in the House of Commons, and a cross-party alliance of MPs (including a number of high-profile Tories) banded together to pass legislation preventing Johnson from pulling the U.K. out of the E.U. absent a deal. Johnson then demanded a general election to secure himself a mandate to move forward with his do-or-die negotiations strategy with Brussels, but British parliamentarians refused that as well until Johnson obtained either an extension or a deal from Brussels.

NOW JOHNSON HAS GONE to the Continent in search of a deal and political salvation. The sticking point, as former Prime Minister May learned, is what happens between Northern Ireland (part of the U.K.) and the Republic of Ireland (part of the E.U.). The Good Friday Agreement that helped end much of the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland did away with any hard border between the two sides, which worked fine so long as both remained part of the E.U. Once the U.K. opted to leave the E.U., Brussels insisted that Northern Ireland remain part of the European customs union as a "backstop" until a system could be devised to keep the border open while protecting the integrity of the E.U. marketplace.

This was a nonstarter for May and, more important, for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which was propping up her government. For them, none of the constituent elements of the U.K. (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) could be subject to a different customs framework from the rest of the kingdom, lest it jeopardize the unity of the country. In the only real significant concession Brussels made to the British, it allowed the backstop to apply to the whole of the U.K. rather than just Northern Ireland until alternative arrangements could be found. Hard-line Brexiteers (Johnson among them) didn't consider this a concession at all and demanded that the backstop be scrapped entirely. Europeans refused to budge and told Johnson to come up with a workable alternative. They're still waiting.

Johnson knows he cannot accept May's deal after campaigning to replace it with a better one, nor leave the E.U. without a deal

Staring political realities in the face, Johnson knows he cannot accept May's deal after campaigning to replace it with a better one, and he cannot leave the E.U. without a deal because of the British Parliament. Talks with European leaders have been cordial but not particularly productive. At the end of the day, his best bet may indeed be accepting a tweaked version of May's deal with a Northern Ireland–only backstop—which the E.U. is likely to grant, since that was its proposal in the first place—and putting it to a vote in the Commons. Since Johnson has lost the working majority anyway, appeasing the DUP is no longer an issue, and plenty of parliamentarians—maybe even a majority of them—could vote for the deal as the least bad option available and finally put an end to the Brexit drama. Then the Brits can hold an election and fight about Brexit at the ballot box—at that point, they'll be the only ones who still care. ◻

QUICK TALK

What people want in a mate

What do humans really want in a long-term partner? And how much of what we want is influenced by culture, as opposed to innate?

In a new report out of Swansea University in the U.K., researchers got 2,700 college students from five countries—three from Western cultures and two from Eastern cultures—to progressively narrow down which characteristics were most important to them in a lifetime mate.

"For men and women from both cultures, the most important trait, hands down, was kindness," says lead author and psychology lecturer Andrew G. Thomas. After that, there was a split by gender: across cultures, men said they value physical attractiveness while women prioritized financial stability. But there were international nuances too. Western partners tended to desire humor more than those from Eastern cultures, who leaned a little more toward religiosity and chastity. Western women also valued mates who wanted to have kids. Thomas attributes this to a higher use of contraceptives in their countries, which makes childbearing more a matter of choice.

—Belinda Luscombe

World

Eye of the Storm

AFTER A TURBULENT YEAR, EMMANUEL MACRON STILL DREAMS OF A NEW FRANCE

BY VIVIENNE WALT/PARIS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON FOR TIME

Macron steps out of a high-level meeting in the Élysée Palace in Paris on Sept. 9

It's a bright early-September day inside France's presidential Élysée Palace, and President Emmanuel Macron is reflecting on the grueling 12 months just past, with the so-called Yellow Vests (gilets jaunes) *protesters raging across the country, many aiming their fury at him.*

That was surely enough to rattle any leader. Yet Macron, leaning forward on his leather couch, offers another view. "In a certain way, the *gilets jaunes* were very good for me," he says, as the afternoon shadows lengthened on the lawn outside. "Because it reminded me who I should be."

The question of who Emmanuel Macron should be has occupied the French, and many around the world, in the three years since the then Economy Minister launched a grassroots uprising of his own. That movement would deliver him the presidency in May 2017 and smash a political order that had lasted for half a century. Macron first and foremost saw himself as a reformer, throwing himself into dismantling rules that he believed had long strangled France's economic prospects. He and his La République En Marche party (LREM) scrapped a wealth tax levied on France's richest residents, trimmed the country's labyrinthine labor regulations and made it less costly for companies to hire and fire staff.

But Macron also saw himself as a global leader. In the two years since his victory, the President, just 41, has inserted himself into every international crisis, striding into the vacuum left by the weakened German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Brexit-distracted U.K. and a U.S. President in retreat from the role of leader of the West. In a fractious European Union, Macron has quietly worked to shape the agenda on pivotal issues like the environment, defense, trade and data privacy. TIME called him the "next leader of Europe" on its November 2017

MAGNUM PHOTOS

cover, adding a caveat—"if only he can lead France."

Over the past year, he has struggled to answer the question raised by the second part of that headline. As the President bestrode the world stage and dreamed up far-reaching reforms to transform France, many of his constituents grew restless. From the start, some in France regarded Macron as an arrogant know-it-all, whose past as an investment banker suggested membership in a hated elite. Macron did little to assuage that opinion in office; scrapping the wealth tax saved the richest French millions. He was quickly nicknamed *le Président des riches* (the President of the rich).

Then, in November 2018, Macron announced an increased fuel tax to help pay for his ambitious green-energy rollout. Thousands snapped in anger, providing the raw ingredients for the Yellow Vests move-

Macron holds a meeting with senior advisers at the Élysée

ment to detonate full force. Unlike the other popular revolts that have periodically rocked France in past decades, this one was not organized by any labor or student organization; it mushroomed leaderless on Facebook, then ricocheted across the country, with protesters battling police, smashing storefronts and burning barricades for months on end.

By December, Macron's popularity had shrunk to about 23%, forcing him to make a chastened retreat from his fuel tax and commit an additional $11 billion to social benefits. With his ambitious reform agenda on the line, Macron decided to launch a monthslong listening tour through the heartland—what he called a *grand débat,* or big debate. It grew out of what he learned from the street violence, he says—that he was too disconnected from the average French person. "My challenge is to listen to people much better than I did at the very beginning," he says now.

His town-hall meetings across France seem to have rescued his presidency. Macron's popularity now sits between 34% and 43%, up nearly 10 points from January. Although the Yellow Vests have resumed their Saturday street battles with police after a summer break, their numbers have shrunk.

The supreme confidence is still here. But in a shift from TIME's last meeting with Macron in 2017, he was relaxed and informal. In his shirtsleeves, he leaned back and reflected at length on his tumultuous time in office and what might lie ahead. He hardly looked like a man who had weathered one of the most violent years in modern France, with Yellow Vests protesters hurling vitriol at him—yet friends say he suffered behind the scenes. "There have been moments, very tough, especially on a personal

standpoint," says Ismaël Emelien, a longtime adviser of Macron's who left the Élysée in February. "He always knew that since we were transforming the country, it would come with some costs."

The President attributes his early mistakes to being in too much of a rush to make changes, storming ahead with little awareness of the negative impact. "I probably provided the feeling that I wanted to reform even against people. And sometimes my impatience was felt as an impatience [with] the French people. That is not the case." Instead, he says, he is impatient with the system itself. "Now, I think I need to take more time to explain where we are and what we want to do exactly."

At the halfway point in a five-year term, Macron plows ahead with Part 2 of what he calls his "revolution." At home, he is taking on the labor unions to reform the country's hugely costly state pensions. And on foreign policy, he is playing peacemaker; he is trying to bring together leaders from Russia, Ukraine and Germany to solve the war on Ukraine's eastern border and urging President Donald Trump to meet face to face with Iran's Hassan Rouhani. He remains convinced of who he should be as President. But at the same time, he says, the experience of his presidency so far has left him feeling alone and exposed. He says he is in the "Death Valley" between setting out reforms and seeing them bear fruit. "The end of Death Valley is the day you have results."

Macron has repeatedly tried in vain to have Trump reverse his isolationist decisions, including withdrawing the U.S. from the nuclear deal between Iran and the major world powers

ON THE OTHER SIDE of that valley is a transformed country, Macron says. "Building this new France is my obsession." Yet it is in that pursuit that his greatest problems lie.

Certainly, some things have gotten better since Macron came to power. France's unemployment rate of 8.5% is now the lowest in more than a decade, down from 9.5% when he took power, according to E.U. statistics. Foreign direct investment in France last year was the highest in over a decade, and growth in 2019 is expected to be a steady 1.3%.

Yet France's public debt has ballooned to nearly 100% of GDP, in part because more than 5 million people still work in its bloated civil service—and because of the billions Macron spent assuaging the Yellow Vests. So Macron began his *rentrée*—what the French call the period following the languid summer break—by pushing for an overhaul of one of France's most cherished institutions: the state-funded pensions that consume 14% of public spending. First on the chopping block were the special privileges for dozens of professions carved out by labor unions over decades.

Unions reacted precisely as they have dozens of times before when confronted with reform-minded politicians: they put down their tools. Paris and other cities virtually ground to a halt on Sept. 13, as public transportation workers went on strike. On Sept. 16, nurses, doctors and even lawyers marched in protest.

Facing the prospect of drawn-out labor action, Macron insists he will make changes through consultation. To those in favor of reforms, that sounds too cautious. "Little by little he is becoming politics as usual," says Daniela Ordonez, chief French economist at the global forecasting company Oxford Economics. "He has this freedom to do whatever he wanted."

But to others, especially on the left, he is trying to create a gig economy in which people fend for themselves. Many French fear losing cherished benefits they have preserved for generations. "To be clear," the left-wing French economist Thomas Piketty wrote in *Le Monde* newspaper on Sept. 10, echoing the opinion of Macron's detractors, "the present government has a big problem with the very concept of social justice."

When Macron talks of creating a green economy with innovation at its core, it can sound as if he is describing a startup rather than a country. "This is a necessity: to build this new country, this new France of the 21st century," he says.

But the old France, in which millions of people depend on the support of a high-spending government, is still very much in evidence. That was clear the day after TIME's interview with Macron, when we accompanied him to Bonneuil-sur-Marne, a middle-class town 10 miles southwest of the city. Under a program in partnership with the government, companies there have hired about 120 people who have been unemployed long term, offering them training and drawing them into the regular workforce.

For more than an hour, Macron inched his way through a factory, engaging in long discussions with each worker about their lives. "How did you come to France?" he asked the mostly new immigrants, who packed sneakers for the French company Veja and dismantled used electronics for recycling. Finally, he took up a chair in the warehouse, which had been turned into a meeting hall for the afternoon, and held court for several hours. About 200 local officials and workers passed around the microphone, alternately complaining about government bureaucracy

and telling the President how the jobs program had changed their lives. A man told Macron the training had "given me my shot after five years of unemployment." "Bravo, that is great news!" Macron replied.

He did not sugarcoat what he believes is happening to France. "Society is unraveling. That's more or less what we are experiencing now," he told the crowd. "If we are not able to fix the problem of great poverty, it will keep fraying." He said his government would spend $1.1 billion on the program during the coming year, up from just over $900 million last year, with the aim of creating 175,000 new jobs. The hall erupted in applause.

But Macron's heavy spending risks blowing the 3% limit on France's public deficit, which the E.U. mandates for each member state."What Macron wants is a change of the E.U. rule that says you have to reduce your debt every year," says Daniel Gros, director of the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels. "I do not think he will get it."

Macron has yet to face that argument in Brussels, where for now he enjoys enormous clout. But at home, he is resigned to losing some battles. He is still referred to as the President of the rich, a nickname he says he has learned to shrug off. "I don't mind if it is fair or not, to be honest with you. I am in charge, and I am the leader, so I take it. I don't care," he says. "In our country, we like leadership and we want to kill the leaders."

At the halfway point in a five-year term, Macron plows ahead with Part 2 of what he calls his "revolution." At home, he is taking on the labor unions to reform the country's hugely costly state pensions

IF MACRON SEEMS to have enough on his plate in France, he also feels a keen responsibility to try to protect the very future of Western freedoms. One of the most important things for the rest of his second term is the "current deadlock of our democracies and the big risk of failure we have," he says.

In Europe, he appears to have prevailed (for now) against the nationalist politicians who seemed in the ascendancy when he took office. Although his LREM party was edged out of first place by Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally in the European parliamentary elections in May, Macron's political grouping is far larger in the European Parliament. Italy's right-wing League party, no fan of Macron's, lost power in early September. And the newly appointed future President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, a Macron favorite, included many of his allies among her 27 commissioners in Brussels. "He is the biggest leader in Europe," says Gros. "There is no one else really around."

Macron is also making a fresh attempt to install himself as the global champion of the multilateral order—the role in which he has long positioned himself, in contrast to the winner-takes-all mentality of Trump, who was elected six months before him. Macron has repeatedly tried in vain to have Trump reverse his isolationist decisions, including withdrawing the U.S. from the nuclear deal between Iran and the major world powers, and from the Paris Agreement on climate change. Macron acknowledges he has mostly hit a brick wall. "When people reproached me not to have succeeded in changing his mind on climate change and so on, I tell them I did my best."

But he says he has "respect" for Trump for sticking to his guns, delivering to his voters what he promised during his campaign. Ultimately, he says, it's up to American voters to decide. "If you want a President being compliant with the Paris Agreement [on climate] or playing differently, elect a President who has such a behavior," he says. "This is democracy."

Even so, the differences with Trump have helped Macron, casting him as the foil to the U.S. President. It is with him that Trump now butts heads on Iran, the Middle East, the environment, NATO and myriad other issues. When Chinese President Xi Jinping flew to Europe last March, he met Macron, Merkel and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker for talks at the Élysée. In August, Russian President Vladimir Putin met Macron in the south of France to discuss a potential peace deal in Ukraine.

The same month, Macron made a *rentrée* to the world stage as host of the annual G-7 summit. There, he outmaneuvered Trump by inviting Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to meet him during the summit, hoping to pave the way for the U.S. President to meet his Iranian counterpart Rouhani—with whom Macron also speaks regularly—perhaps at the U.N. General Assembly in New York City in September. Macron sees Iran as the one issue on which he might well influence Trump, though Iran has ruled out such a meeting.

Iran was just one issue at the G-7 summit in Biarritz, however. Macron also mobilized the other six leaders to help fight the fires raging in the Amazon forests, raising a modest $20 million from the group. In response, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro attacked Macron personally, liking a meme that compared the two men's wives that a user posted on Bolsonaro's Facebook page and

The President and his wife Brigitte share a moment as he wraps up work just before dinner

suggesting Macron would prefer Brazil's First Lady.

The action was regarded even by many Brazilians as insulting, but for Macron the outrage was genuine. The remark had hit at his most treasured sphere, his family. "When somebody insults your wife, I mean this is unacceptable," Macron says. "I'm profoundly hurt by this lack of not just elegance but decency."

EVEN IF MACRON wins a second term in office in 2022, he will still be just 49 when he moves out of the Élysée—young enough to create an entire second career. And a glimpse at Macron's private life inside the presidential palace makes it tempting to imagine what kind of life that might be.

A lifelong bibliophile, Macron says he carves out "one or two hours" a day for reading—essential for his well-being, he says. Over the summer, he reread books by Albert Camus and polished off the new novel by French writer Luc Lang, among others. Once or twice a week he plays sports, including boxing, sparring with his bodyguards in the sweeping gardens of the Élysée. Downtime is crucial, he says, "to remain independent and to think and remain creative." A karaoke maven while a graduate student, Macron admits he "still sings" karaoke "in some contexts." And his musical tastes are last century: French greats Charles Aznavour and Johnny Hallyday.

His wife Brigitte, 66, organizes their private life, committing the President to spending holidays and birthdays with her three children (two of them older than Macron) and their families, whom Macron refers to simply as "my family." There was almost a familial atmosphere on the day TIME visited. Many of Macron's aides, a group of about 50, are close associates he has worked with for years. At the start of the day, Nemo, Macron's black Labrador-griffon rescue dog, came puttering down the grand, empty staircase, until a presidential guard gently guided him back upstairs to his master. After dark, Macron and his wife caught up on the day in his private office, while he organized papers.

It took some time for Macron to settle on a life in politics. He had always dreamed of being a writer and is convinced he ultimately will be one; he wrote a novel, unpublished, while he was an undergraduate student. "I will write," he says. "That is why I am very peaceful about the future. The day people will decide I am no more in charge, I know what I will do." It would be a drastic change of pace from his existence as President, but Macron claims he would welcome it. "I love family, friends, books. I am ready to be alone and quiet," he says. The one question is whether he will be writing in a truly transformed France or one in which a young, dapper leader reached for a revolution but managed only to tinker with the old system. ◻

Society

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Juul is the dominant e-cigarette in the U.S., with about half of the market share

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY JAMIE CHUNG FOR TIME

DE THE NGEROUS ISE OF JUUL

How a mostly unregulated company disrupted Big Tobacco and hooked millions of Americans on a new vice

BY JAMIE DUCHARME

IN THE SCHEETZ HOUSEHOLD, BACK-TO-SCHOOL ANXIETY REACHED NEW HEIGHTS THIS FALL.

Jami Scheetz's 15-year-old son Devon, who has severe asthma, kicked a brutal vaping habit over the summer, with help from a nicotine patch. But as soon as school started and he was once again around kids vaping, his habit returned. On Sept. 12, Devon vaped at school and immediately began sweating and vomiting. Though Scheetz, who lives in Sellersville, Pa., says her son is now fine, she can't shake thoughts of kids who have been hospitalized or died after using e-cigarettes. "Vaping scares me more [than smoking], because they don't know what's really in it," she says.

To a remarkable degree, a single company is front and center in one of the biggest public-health crises facing the country: the sharp rise in vaping among teenagers and young adults. In 2018, 30% of the nation's 12th-graders reported vaping nicotine at least once in the past year, according to a January 2019 study sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The study said the increase in vaping last year was "the largest ever recorded for any substance in the 44 years" that it has tracked adolescent drug use.

Though Juul is not the only e-cigarette for sale in the U.S., it is largely blamed for the vaping explosion and controls about 50% of the market, putting a sharp focus on the company. On Sept. 9, the Food and Drug Administration sent Juul a warning letter accusing the company of violating federal regulations by promoting its e-cigarettes as a safer option than traditional cigarettes and threatening the company with fines and product seizures if it continued. Two days later, the Trump Administration said it planned to pull from the market flavored e-cigarettes such as Juul's mango, creme and mint pods. In the Oval Office, with First Lady Melania at his side, President Trump said, "We can't allow people to get sick. And we can't have our youth be so affected." He added that the First Lady, who tweeted a warning about vaping, feels "very, very strongly" about the issue because of their teenage son Barron. Just days later, New York banned most flavored e-cigarettes statewide, following in the footsteps of Michigan and Juul's home city of San Francisco, whose mayor signed an ordinance effectively banning e-cigarettes. The recent moves were prompted by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports of almost 400 serious lung illnesses and six deaths it linked to vaping, which a congressional committee is also investigating. While Juul products have not been implicated in the deaths, the CDC in September advised Americans to "consider not using e-cigarette products" while its investigation is ongoing. The American Lung Association went further, saying in a statement that "no one should use e-cigarettes or any other tobacco product." Huge international markets, including India and China, are also restricting the sale of e-cigarettes.

Given the possible risks to the nation's youth, Juul's rapid growth has been accompanied by remarkably little oversight or regulation. And while

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS MAGGIO FOR TIME (5)

E-cigarettes vaporize a potent liquid packed with nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals

there is a legitimate debate over whether e-cigarettes are safer for adult smokers than traditional cigarettes, and whether they can help addicts quit smoking, critics argue that Juul has assiduously followed Big Tobacco's playbook: aggressively marketing to youth and making implied health claims a central pillar of its business plan. Juul maintains that it is not Big Tobacco 2.0. In eight months, unless e-cigarette companies can prove to the FDA that vaping is "appropriate for the protection of public health," the products could be pulled from the market. That would curtail youth use, but some fear it could also cut off adult smokers' access to a potentially beneficial product.

Juul, which was valued at $38 billion by its investors before the Trump Administration's crackdown, is now facing what CEO Kevin Burns in July called an "existential" threat, due to rising levels of youth use. Lobbyists, staff scientists and PR experts are working feverishly to respond to the growing public outrage. "Sh-t happens," Burns told TIME in July, foreshadowing the rocky summer to come. "We've got to respond. I would love it to be less dynamic here than it is, because it's not easy on the organization. But I think the organization understands that we're at the forefront here and it's going to be volatile." Juul says that it does not make health claims and that it has never marketed to youth. The company has taken recent steps to make it harder for young people to illegally buy its products, both online and in stores.

Nobody hates Juul more than parents, many of whom are watching their children fall prey to the "epidemic on speed" that is Juuling, as New York parent Erin Mills puts it. She blames her son's two-year addiction to Juuls for causing his grades and social life to plummet, while she says she and her husband watched helplessly. It's "like this tsunami," she says, "and I see my child going under."

To help parents like Mills, New York City mothers Meredith Berkman, Dorian Fuhrman and Dina Alessi formed the advocacy group Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes in 2018. It has grown to about a dozen chapters across the country. Berkman argued at a congressional hearing in July that today's kids are becoming "an entire generation of nicotine addicts" and "human guinea pigs for the Juul experiment." Filmmaker Judd Apatow made his opinion clear on Sept. 9, tweeting, "Juul is some evil sh-t … Keep your kids away from it. It's a scam to get you addicted."

Hundreds of U.S. school districts have installed electronic vape detectors in their bathrooms—or "Juul rooms"—and one in Alabama went further, removing some bathroom doors to make it harder to vape in secret. But the product's design has complicated that task. Juul's $35 sleek slate gray and silver e-cigs are often compared to flash drives or iPhones, in sharp contrast to the clunky, tank-style devices that preceded them. They're small enough to fit in the palm of your hand and subtly vaporize pods of liquid containing nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals. A four-pack costs $16, and each 200-puff pod delivers as much nicotine as a pack of 20 cigarettes.

Halving cigarette-smoking rates since the 1960s remains one of America's biggest public-health triumphs, even though smoking—which is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths annually—remains the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. Teen cigarette smoking, too, had seen historic declines in recent years. Now that hard-won success may be in peril.

The magnitude of the teen-vaping problem began to emerge last November, when the FDA announced that almost 21% of high school students had vaped during the previous month, a 78% increase over the year before. That number jumped again this year, to 27.5%, meaning that more than 4 million American teenagers vape regularly, according to preliminary reports from federal health officials. The 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey found that about 3.5% of high school students—more than 525,000 teenagers—vaped every or almost every day. Particularly alarming is vaping's appeal to younger teenagers. Use among eighth-graders more than doubled in 2018, to 10%, according to data posted by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). There are concerns that such early adoption of vaping will "represent a gateway to the use of traditional cigarettes," according to HHS. Eighth-graders who vape are 10 times as likely to eventually smoke cigarettes as their nonvaping peers, HHS says.

E-cigs had been on the market for almost a decade before Juul—competitors today include Blu and NJOY—though none had really taken off. Juul, which made an estimated $1.27 billion during the first half of this year, sold 2.2 million devices in 2016, its first full year on the market, and 16.2 million the year after, according to CDC data. Today Juul is a major part of the pop-culture zeitgeist, with flourishing hashtags on Instagram and Twitter (#Juul, #JuulTricks, #JuulMemes) and accounts devoted to celebrity Juul use (@Sophie_Turner_Juuling).

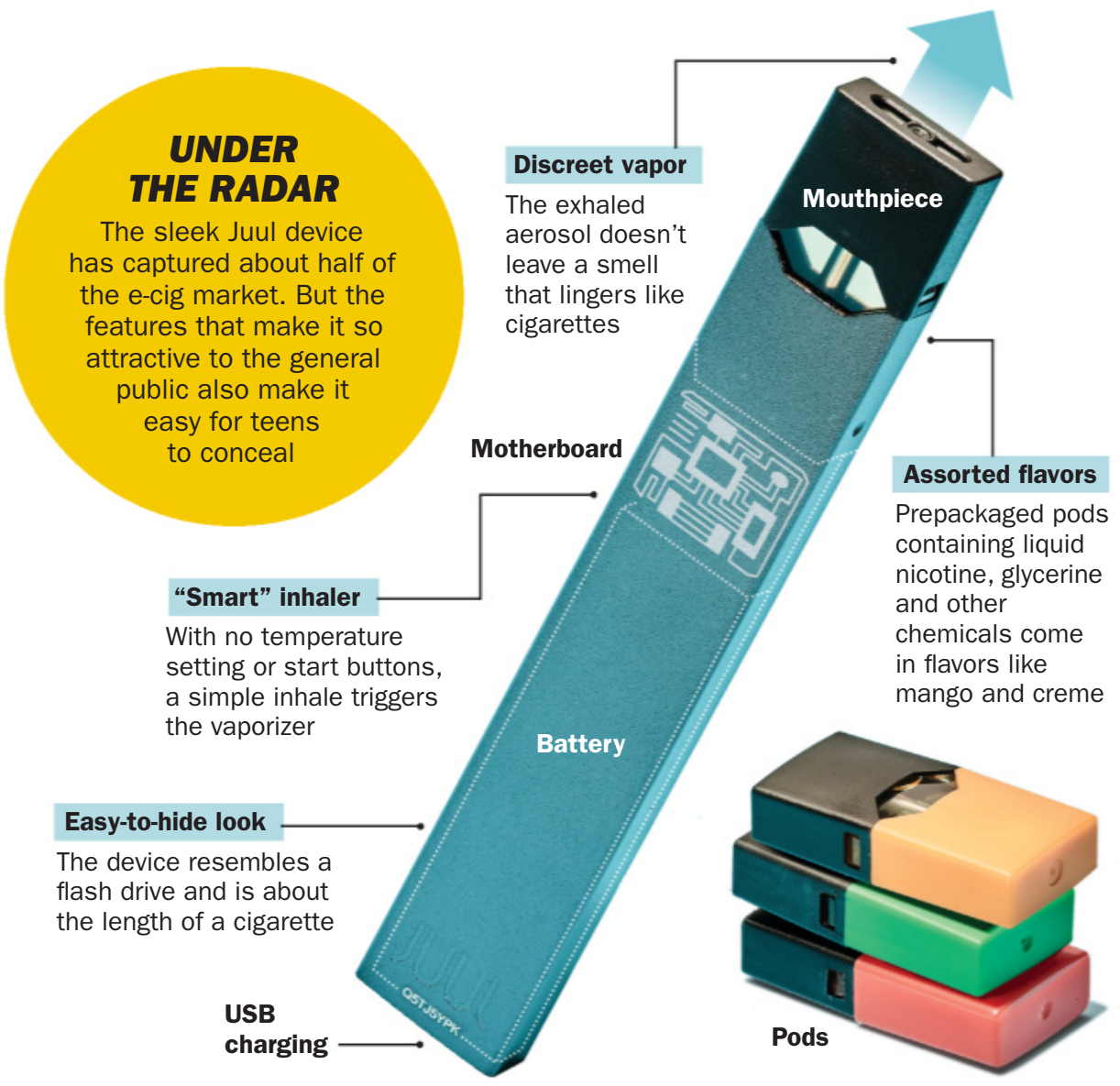
For young people, the relationship between vaping and taking up smoking is murky. The percentage of high schoolers smoking cigarettes rose from 7.6% to 8.1% in 2018. But so far this year, even as vaping has continued to soar, youth smoking rates dropped back down to 5.8%, according to HHS data. Still, many fear that vaping is creating lifelong nicotine addicts. "They're bringing kids who are at low risk of smoking into the margin," says Stanton Glantz, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). "A lot of those kids then transition to regular cigarettes." Just 20 years ago, 23% of 12th-graders smoked daily, compared with 3.6% in 2018. With youth nicotine use ticking up because of vaping, history seems in danger of repeating itself.

JUUL CO-FOUNDERS James Monsees, 39, and Adam Bowen, 44, didn't set out to create America's most hated startup. As graduate students in product design at Stanford 14 years ago, they dreamed up the device that would disrupt a global industry and become a status symbol for many young people. In 2018, Altria (the parent company of brands including Marlboro) bought a 35% stake for $12.8 billion, making Monsees and Bowen, who each own less than 5% of the company, worth more than $1 billion each.

Monsees, a physics and studio-art graduate of Kenyon College, and Bowen, who studied physics at Pomona College, famously became friends during smoke breaks at Stanford. It was their own struggle to quit that inspired them to create a product that could help. In 2007 they founded Ploom Inc., which would later be known as Pax Labs. At Pax, they began developing a line of cannabis vaporizers and the nicotine-vaporizing device that would become Juul. As the company ramped up ahead of Juul's 2015 launch, Monsees and Bowen—who were named to TIME's 2019 list of 100 most influential people—began making moves that didn't fit so neatly into the public-health-warrior narrative they'd honed. At the congressional hearing in July, Stanford tobacco-advertising researcher Dr. Robert Jackler testified that one of the founders had thanked him for compiling a database of tobacco ads, saying they were very helpful as they designed Juul's advertising. Monsees had a very different recollection of the conversation, explaining that they used the archive to learn how not to run a business.

Juul's empire has always been built on asking forgiveness rather than permission. In 2015, the company launched with its now notorious "Vaporized" campaign, which was called "patently youth-oriented" in a 2019 Stanford white paper authored by Jackler. Colorful ads featured youthful models wearing crop tops and ripped jeans, flirting with the camera as they flaunted their Juuls.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIE CHUNG FOR TIME



The product's rollout was accompanied by lavish launch parties, Times Square billboards and an Instagram-heavy social-media blitz. Bowen told TIME—in one of many interviews conducted with company executives over several months—that if he could do it over, the company "would have gone out with a different launch campaign that focused more, as we do now, on the purpose of the product, which is to help smokers switch." Glantz doesn't buy that the company didn't mean to attract youth. Monsees and Bowen consulted him on their device early on, and he says they brushed him off when he said the device would likely appeal to kids. "When they come back and say, 'This was an accident,' it's like, 'Oh, bullsh-t,'" Glantz says. Bowen says he remembers the meeting but does not recall youth use coming up.

Juul also went to schools and developed classroom curriculums, both ostensibly meant to educate kids about healthy lifestyles and nicotine addiction. But kids who participated in these programs remember them differently. Meredith Berkman's son Caleb Mintz, now 17, testified before Congress in July that a Juul representative visited his ninth-grade classroom in 2017 and told the students that—though Juul didn't want them as customers—its product was "totally safe." Mintz told Congress that his classmates left the meeting more likely to vape, "because now they thought it was just a flavor device that didn't have any harmful substances in it." Juul has since halted these programs, but some were conducted as recently as last year. "We had hired educational experts to help us come up with a program that we felt would be helpful to stop kids using Juul," a company official said in congressional testimony in July. "We then received feedback that it was not well received and in addition, received input from a public-health expert telling us what tobacco companies had previously done, which we were not aware of, and as a result of all of that information we stopped that program."

FOR A CENTURY, cigarette companies have tried to persuade consumers to switch from one brand to another by making health claims both veiled and blatant. Camel famously bragged in a 1946 ad that "more doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarette." Around the same time, Lucky Strike claimed it had "removed … the pungent irritants present in cigarettes manufactured the old-fashioned way."

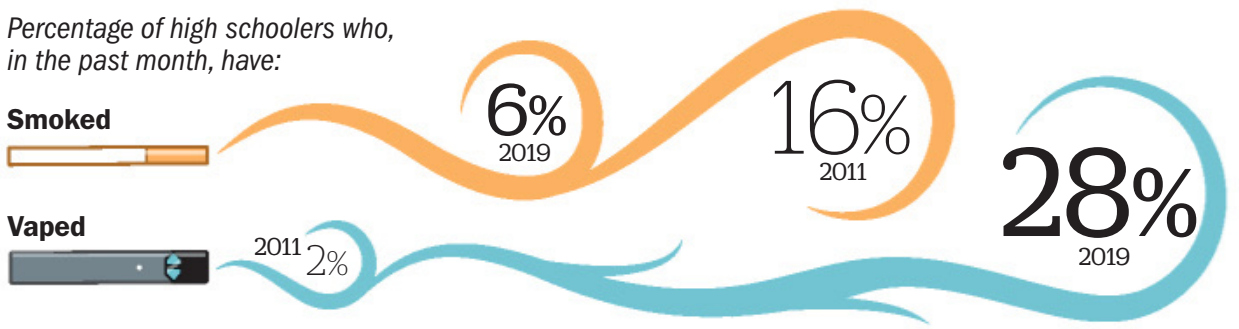
Juul has adopted that tactic for itself, designing an entire brand based on the idea of "switching" from cigarettes to vapes. Some of its ads seem to crib directly from old cigarette spots, with slogans like "simple, smart, intensely satisfying" and "smoking evolved." Others apply the old idea of switching to new ground, by calling e-cigarettes a way to "improve the lives of the world's 1 billion adult smokers by eliminating cigarettes." Its ads do not explicitly say customers will be healthier if they switch from cigarettes, but "the message is absolutely unmistakable," Jackler says.

Juul disagrees, saying that *switching* is not another word for cessation or safer. "They mean very different things," according to the company. "Switching involves continuing to consume nicotine but from a different device, while cessation is about getting users to eliminate their nicotine consumption altogether."

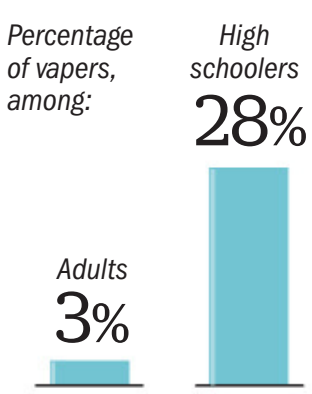
The health impact of vaping for adult smokers is one of the most polarizing questions in medicine, and one that scientists say no one can fully answer without years of additional research. Juul, unsurprisingly, is on one end of the spectrum, boasting, as Monsees did at the TIME 100 event in April, that its device represents "one of the greatest opportunities for public health in the history of mankind." Some experts, like Glantz, are on the other end, arguing that e-cigarettes are "a disaster" and that "the idea that these things are somehow radically safer than cigarettes is just not true." Many independent researchers say the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

When someone lights a cigarette, tobacco mixes with oxygen, creating an inhalable smoke as well as about 7,000 by-products, around 70 of which are known to cause cancer. E-cigarettes operate under the premise that this combustion, not nicotine, is to blame for most of the health problems associated with smoking, including cancer, heart problems and lung disease. Instead of burning tobacco, Juuls heat a potent liquid cocktail of nicotine salts, flavoring compounds, propylene glycol and glycerine to create an inhalable vapor.

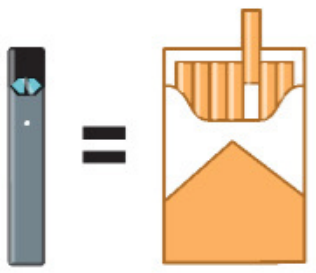
VAPING IS FAR MORE POPULAR THAN SMOKING IN HIGH SCHOOLS NOW



TEENS ARE VAPING AT A MUCH HIGHER RATE THAN ADULTS ARE

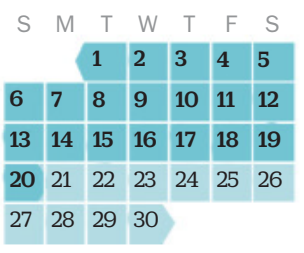


DRAWN IN PART BY THE ADDICTIVE NICOTINE



One Juul pod delivers the same amount of nicotine as a ***pack of 20 cigarettes***

THAT CAN LEAD TO LONG-TERM USE



28% *of teen vapers said they had used an e-cig on* ***at least 20*** *of the past 30 days*

SOURCES: NATIONAL YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY; CDC; JUUL LABS INC.; TRUTH INITIATIVE; PEDIATRICS, 2018, VOL. 141
NOTE: FIGURES REFLECT MOST RECENTLY AVAILABLE SURVEYS, 2019 FIGURES PRELIMINARY

E-cigarettes do contain fewer toxic chemicals, including carcinogens, than cigarettes, so switching could translate to lower rates of smoking-related disease. One 2017 study funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimated that if almost all U.S. smokers older than 15 switched to vapes, the benefits could save up to 6.6 million lives. "If we look at it from the population perspective, it's likely that Juul could be lifesaving," says Andy Tan, an assistant professor in the division of population sciences at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

But it's too simple to look only at "known" carcinogens. It's not yet clear what impact some of the ingredients unique to e-cigs could have on health, and the products haven't been around long enough for scientists to know how they affect the body over decades. Studies funded by academic institutions, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the FDA and the Emphysema Research Fund show links between e-cigarette use and cardiovascular issues, respiratory disease and DNA damage that may be a harbinger of cancer. Using e-cigarettes in conjunction with traditional cigarettes, which the CDC says many users do, may also nullify many of the possible health benefits that come with e-cigs, according to NIH-funded research. And the recent rash of deaths and diseases associated with vaping have made it harder than ever to argue that e-cigarettes are safe.

The cost-benefit analysis is also different for teenagers, many of whom didn't smoke before they started Juuling and whose developing brains can be harmed by nicotine. These concerns shouldn't be minimized, says Dr. Michael Siegel, a professor of community health sciences at the Boston University School of Public Health, but he worries that they've diverted attention from e-cigs' public-health potential. Siegel says we risk "regulating [e-cigarettes] out of existence." The result, he and other advocates fear, could be a world where adult smokers can hardly access a product that could theoretically save their lives, pushing them back toward cigarettes.

Just a few years ago, that concern would have been unimaginable. Juul's growth benefited from an extraordinary regulatory loophole that will soon slam shut. When Juul launched in 2015, the FDA was still a year away from finalizing its regulatory power over e-cigarettes. That allowed the product to hit consumers' lungs without ever filing an application with the FDA or having to deal with the strict regulations the agency imposes on traditional cigarettes.

In the same way the federal government has had to play catch-up to regulate tech giants like Facebook and Google, Juul's technology caught regulators unprepared. Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi, the Illinois Congressman who oversaw July's hearing and urged the FDA to deem Juul's health claims illegal, says the FDA also needs to stop the company from subtly marketing its product as a smoking-cessation device. "The FDA has unfortunately been kind of AWOL on this," he says. "I'm glad to see they're coming alive right now … better late than never." The FDA says oversight of e-cigarettes is a "top priority" for the agency. On Sept. 18, Krishnamoorthi sent Juul a letter threatening a subpoena if the company did not produce documents previously requested by Congress.

In May 2020, the FDA will start weighing "the deeply troubling uptake of these products by our nation's youth against the possible benefits of decreased use of combustible tobacco products by adults," says Acting Commissioner Dr. Ned Sharpless. If, at that time, e-cig companies cannot prove their products protect public health, the FDA has the right to remove them from the market entirely.

Juul executives have been working for months to keep up with an ever changing regulatory environment, and among the hundreds of open jobs on its website is a dedicated FDA regulatory counsel. There's no question that the White House's crackdown on flavors will hit Juul where it hurts. More than 80% of the pods the company sells are flavored, so pulling those from the market will result in a huge revenue hit. But a company source calls the potential result of the government's actions "short-term pain, but potentially long-term what the category needs," since driving down youth use is pivotal to securing FDA authorization and keeping Juuls on the market.

Juul has made moves to curb youth use. Last year it deleted its U.S. Instagram and Facebook accounts, which critics argued appealed to teenagers. Juul also limited online sales to those 21 and older, even in states where the legal purchasing age is 18. And a year before the proposed flavor ban, it halted sales of all but mint, menthol and tobacco flavors in stores. The company also emphasizes that it does not sell products in flavors like cotton candy and bubble gum and is discouraging competitors from making such nicotine pods that fit into Juul vaporizers. Most recently, Juul persuaded around 40,000 stores nationwide to implement a point-of-sale system that won't sell a Juul until it scans a valid ID and that will discourage resellers by rejecting bulk purchases of more than one device and four packs of nicotine pods. The company says it will not do business with retailers that don't have the system in place within two years.

Still, former FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb says it will be hard for regulators to forget how many kids have become hooked on nicotine because of Juul. "Is it going to be easy for them to get approved? No, it's not," he says. "Would I consider taking the pod-based products off the market [if I were still FDA commissioner]? Yes, absolutely I would."

'IS IT GOING TO BE EASY FOR THEM TO GET APPROVED? NO, IT'S NOT.'

—FORMER FDA COMMISSIONER DR. SCOTT GOTTLIEB

UNTIL RECENTLY, Juul's Bay Area headquarters had the same vibe as any other Silicon Valley startup. Its hip, open offices on San Francisco's Pier 70 boast a deck and airy communal work spaces. Framed signs spelling out the company's values—mission first, think big, deliver quality, debate and commit, go, own it, give back—dot the walls. The 3,800-person workforce, up from about 225 in 2017, includes a healthy share of millennials, and staffers eagerly line up each day when the requisite free lunch is served. "A bigger concern than the FDA is running out

JASON HENRY—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

Monsees, left, and Bowen got the idea for Juul as graduate students at Stanford

of avocados," CEO Burns joked in July, before the latest developments.

Burns, a former Chobani executive who joined the company in 2017, was intrigued by the challenge of helping a then small company grow as fast as the category it all but created—even if his friends, family and teenage children had misgivings. "It was not a slam dunk," he says of taking the job. "I have a lot of friends that I've known for a long time who kind of look at you and say, 'Really?'"

Despite the chill startup feel, behind the scenes Juul is just trying to stay above water. In October 2018 it hired publicist Josh Raffel away from crisis-management central: the Trump White House. Raffel is one of many former political staffers at the company, including some from the Trump, Obama and Bush administrations. This year Juul launched a $10 million-plus television ad campaign featuring testimonials from adult users. And, like Big Tobacco giants before it, Juul has begun wooing top researchers to lend the company gravitas. In July, Dr. Mark Rubinstein joined the company as executive medical officer, after years of research at UCSF on adolescent nicotine use. Rubinstein admits the move seems strange, but he says he can better prevent youth use by "working from the inside, [rather] than just writing papers and shouting from the outside."

Juul also has a strong presence on Capitol Hill, spending $2 million on lobbying so far this year and deploying more than 80 lobbyists working on causes like raising the legal purchasing age for tobacco products to 21. Gottlieb, the former FDA commissioner, told a CNBC reporter in August that Juul and Altria were the "worst offenders," in terms of going around the FDA to lobby Washington directly. (Juul maintains that it has always supported the need for category-wide federal regulations on e-cigarettes.) This year, instead of targeting only tobacco-friendly Republicans, Juul has started funneling money toward Democrats and supporting groups like the Congressional Black Caucus PAC. That, too, has been a tactic of Big Tobacco, which has long marketed to communities of color.

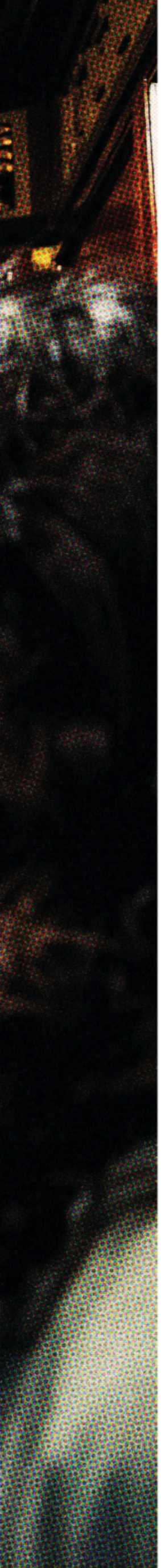
The company's most public taste of life in the crosshairs came during the July congressional hearing, when lawmaker after lawmaker questioned Monsees about his company's role in the youth-vaping epidemic. Monsees demurred on some questions but stayed on message. "[The mission of the company] is to help improve the lives of adult smokers" he said in his opening statement. "We never wanted any non–nicotine user, and certainly nobody under the legal age of purchase, to ever use Juul products."

Monsees and Bowen are both workaholics who keep grueling travel schedules that often have them launching Juul and accompanying products, like an app that tracks usage, in international markets like the U.K. and Canada. Bowen, the more reserved of the pair, is diplomatic about the constant barrage of criticism their jobs entail, saying it's "not surprising" and the company "welcomes the concerns, the feedback." In an interview at Juul's D.C. office in August, he chooses his words carefully when discussing the balancing act regulators and lawmakers face, but says he's confident Juul and the FDA will find common ground. "What I would like to see in these discussions is more focus on data [about switching from cigarettes] than just"—he stops, considering the second half of the sentence—"the emotional reaction to these products."

He never says it outright, but Bowen seems to understand why people react emotionally to e-cigs. A former smoker, he knows that addiction is a sensitive topic. He gets the cynicism over the Altria deal; even he was skeptical at first, he says, and moved forward only once Altria promised prime retail placement and access to its customer database. And he says the company took early critiques over its initial launch campaign to heart. "It was six months and we pulled it," he says. When pressed on what, aside from marketing, he would have done differently as Juul grew, his tone turns lighthearted—at first. "Now you're opening up a Pandora's box," he says. "It's too long …"

He trails off, searching for the right words. Finally, he finishes his thought: "You can always do things better, every step of the way."

Archila confronts Flake on Sept. 28, 2018, as she and Gallagher (not pictured) beg him not to confirm Kavanaugh



Essay

SHOUTING INTO THE VOID

How many personal stories must women share to convince others of their humanity?

BY LYZ LENZ

YOU CANNOT SEE MARIA GALLAGHER AT FIRST. ALL YOU hear are her words, spoken quickly, each one sounding as if it had taken the long way out of her—drenched in the deepest parts of her rage and pain. What you can see is the man, Senator Jeff Flake, looking down, looking away, looking anywhere but at Gallagher.

"I was sexually assaulted, and nobody believed me. I didn't tell anyone, and you're telling all women that they don't matter, that they should just stay quiet because if they tell you what happened to them, you are going to ignore them," Gallagher says to Flake, while she stands outside the elevator and he stands inside.

You can see Gallagher's head now. "Don't look away from me," she says, desperation in her voice.

Elevators are liminal, in-between places of transition. This one is stopped by two women, Gallagher and Ana Maria Archila, as they force a U.S. Senator to hear the truth about their bodies. I watched the clip, over and over, in my bedroom. Watching felt like a scream. It felt like all of us screaming.

The day before, one year ago this September, Flake had heard the sworn testimony of Christine Blasey Ford, who accused then Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her when they were in high school. Now, confronted with two more stories of assault, Flake nods but remains largely silent.

A week later, he voted to confirm Kavanaugh to a lifetime appointment on our nation's highest court.

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN MCCABE FOR TIME

Essay

Women have long been compelled to share their most private moments in order to convince others of their humanity. But in recent years, as we've peered into an uncertain future and need only pull out our phones to see highly personal warnings of the stakes, everything seems amplified. The waves of stories, put forth in tweets and speeches, testimony and essays, have felt incessant, each crashing down upon us with little chance to breathe before the next one.

As more men, including the President of the United States, have been publicly accused of assault and misconduct, and more states have passed laws that restrict our abilities to make decisions about our own health care, women have been repeatedly reminded of this country's disregard for our bodily autonomy and indifference to the reality of our lives. And so we come forward, again and again, to put a human face on situations that are all too often discussed in the abstract. We make public what was once private, absorbing the pain of others, enduring the backlash for having made choices about our bodies or having had things done to our bodies that we did not consent to.

We share and share and share. We offer up our experiences for mass consumption, hoping that maybe this will be the time we break through. But does any of it make a difference?

"I AM HERE TODAY not because I want to be. I am terrified. I am here because I believe it is my civic duty to tell you what happened to me while Brett Kavanaugh and I were in high school," Ford said in her opening statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee. She looked so tired sitting there, her only request caffeine, but she remained calm as she recounted each detail of the night that has haunted her for decades. (Kavanaugh has denied the allegation.)

Ford had tried to keep her story private. She had reached out to an elected official in a confidential letter. But when her allegation leaked to the media, she decided she should be the one to tell her story. Now she was sitting in front of a panel of politicians, who were frowning, judging, as she excavated her trauma for an unforgiving and violent nation. In the end, the political process ran right over her, as if she were a speed bump, nothing more than an annoying slowdown on the march of a patriarchal agenda.

Nearly three decades earlier, in 1991, Anita Hill accused Clarence Thomas, then a Supreme Court nominee, of sexually harassing her when he worked as her supervisor. "It would have been more comfortable to remain silent," she told Congress. "But when I was asked by a representative of this committee to report my experience, I felt that I had to tell the truth." Thomas, who has denied the allegation, has now been on the court for 28 years.

How many stories does it take? How many voices do we need? How many more traumas do we have to debate until someone listens? How long until society recognizes that women are the authorities of our own experiences?

This struggle is not new, nor is it exclusive to cisgender women. Anyone who has traditionally been barred from or underrepresented in political power—that is, anyone who is not a cisgender, white, heterosexual, able-bodied man—has had to turn themselves inside out to prove themselves worthy of being listened to. In the 19th century, former slaves like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs presented unvarnished accounts of the cruelty they experienced. Their fight to have their humanity recognized is one that has continued for people of color to this day. In 1977, Audre Lorde, a black lesbian poet, gave a speech at the Modern Language Association's "Lesbian and Literature" panel, saying, "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect." She went on to challenge her audience: "What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?"

WE ARE ALL PEOPLE. SOME OF US JUST HAVE TO MAKE THE CASE FOR THIS FACT, WHILE OTHERS GET TO LIVE THEIR LIVES AS THE SOCIETAL DEFAULT

In recent years, young immigrants have opened up about their lives despite the risk that they could be forced to leave the country they call home. When Larissa Martinez revealed her undocumented status in her 2016 valedictorian speech at her Texas high school, she explained, "This might be my only chance to convey the truth to all of you that undocumented immigrants are people too."

We are all people. Some of us just have to make the case for this fact, while others get to live their lives as the societal default. It's been that way since at least the days of ancient Rome, when women could not vote or hold political office and were excluded from speaking out on the Senate floor. The only time a woman was allowed to speak in Roman life was as a victim, a martyr or a protector of her family.

In the late 1960s, feminist groups like the New York Radical Women and the Chicago Women's Liberation Union began engaging in consciousness-raising, in which they would meet to talk about the sexism and patriarchal oppression in their lives. As the conversations moved from the private to the public, women rallied around the idea that the personal is political. In 1972, a year before *Roe v. Wade,* 53 women—including Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Billie Jean King, Judy Collins, Anaïs Nin, Gloria Steinem,

From left: Hill testifies about alleged sexual harassment in 1991; Philipps tells viewers about her abortion in 2019; Ford testifies about alleged sexual assault in 2018

Susan Sontag and Nora Ephron—published a letter in *Ms.* magazine under the headline WE HAVE HAD ABORTIONS.

"You can't just mold yourself to be well-behaved so you're ready for a debate. You have to also be able to be in touch with the grim reality here, which is that we will never be free until we're free inside of our own skin," Pogrebin, now 80, told me. A founding editor of *Ms.*, Pogrebin believes that telling our stories is essential "so that it isn't just one narrative that gets out there." Her own story is one of an 18-year-old who could barely support herself, much less a child. "Not having that child allowed me to have three wanted children," she says.

In the past, you could miss these stories if you didn't read the publications that covered them—and certainly the coverage was not what it is today. Or perhaps you weren't included in the conversation. Many of the groups of the 1960s were dominated by white upper-class women.

Now, if you spend time online, it's hard to insulate yourself from the realities others experience. The sharing of our personal stories happens so often, it's difficult to keep track. Some storytellers are still privileged above others, but social media has removed some of the artifice about who these issues affect and their scope.

Every era is defined by the collective cry of those denied their humanity, by the shouts of those who have to fight to be seen. They may seem particularly loud now, but women were screaming their stories before Trump's presidency, before Kavanaugh.

In 2014, after a video showed former NFL star Ray Rice knocking his then fiancée Janay Palmer unconscious and dragging her body from an elevator, many people asked why she would stay with him. Women responded by sharing their own stories of domestic abuse with the hashtags #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft. In 2015, after the House voted to defund Planned Parenthood, Amelia Bonow wrote a piece about her abortion, and her friend Lindy West shared it with the hashtag #ShoutYourAbortion. Soon stories were pouring in. In 2016, after the *Access Hollywood* tape revealed Trump bragging about assaulting women, the writer Kelly Oxford encouraged women to tweet about their first assaults: "I'll go first: Old man on city bus grabs my 'pussy' and smiles at me, I'm 12," she wrote. Within days she had received tens of thousands of tweets with the hashtag #NotOkay. In 2017, after Harvey Weinstein and other powerful men were publicly accused of assault, Alyssa Milano called on women who had been sexually harassed or assaulted to reply "me too" to her tweet, a reference to the Me Too movement started more than a decade earlier by Tarana Burke. The #MeToo hashtag exploded. This year, after the Alabama senate passed a near total ban on abortion, Busy Philipps discussed her own abortion on her talk show, *Busy Tonight*. "Maybe you're sitting there thinking, 'I don't know a woman who would have an abortion,'" she said. "Well, you know me." And the rush of stories began again, thousands of women tweeting their own experiences with the hashtag #YouKnowMe.

"We live in a patriarchal society that hasn't been listening, that hasn't been making changes," Philipps told me. "And sometimes, the only way things can change is by people feeling uncomfortable."

BUT WHAT HAPPENS when we're the ones who end up feeling uncomfortable or even unsafe? There are consequences to speaking up, and while some women would share their stories anyway, others admit they are doing so only because they feel they have no choice, as in the case of Ford and Hill, or because they are fearful enough about what will happen if they don't. In a New York *Times* op-ed in June, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal explained that she didn't think she should have to publicly discuss her abortion. She

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEAN MCCABE FOR TIME; SOURCE PHOTOS: OPENING PAGE: JIM LO SCALZO—EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK; THESE PAGES: LAURA PATTERSON—CQ ROLL CALL/GETTY IMAGES; BUSY TONIGHT/E!; MELINA MARA—POOL/GETTY IMAGES

shared private medical information, she wrote, "because I am deeply concerned about the intensified efforts to strip choice and constitutional rights away from pregnant people and the simplistic ways of trying to criminalize abortion."

Hill was smeared—recall David Brock's infamous line "a little bit nutty and a little bit slutty"—and received death threats. Ford had to go into hiding. She still hasn't been able to return to normal life. Bonow, too, got threats serious enough that she had to leave town. Former Nevada state assembly member Lucy Flores faced backlash both in 2019, after she wrote that Joe Biden's touching had made her uncomfortable, *and* in 2013, after she revealed that she had had an abortion at 16. Once, after sharing my own story of professional harassment, I was driven off the Internet by rape threats and people threatening to call child services. Panic attacks. Anxiety dreams.

Earlier this year, some women approached me with concerns about a man who wanted to seek a prominent position in my community. What could we do? I contacted someone in a position of power. His advice: Share their stories. Go public. I was furious. How does that work out for women? I asked him. It rarely turns out well. Their bodies are debated, looks picked apart, reputations ruined. Why, I asked him, do women always have to be the canaries in the coal mine of the political process? That's just the system, he told me. It sucks, but it's the system.

In June, the advice columnist E. Jean Carroll accused the President of raping her in a department-store dressing room in the '90s. I read her essay about it on an airplane and cried, relieved that no one was in the seat next to me so I wouldn't have to explain how another woman had been hurt. Another woman was sharing her story, and it still wouldn't be enough. (Trump denies the allegation.)

In her essay, Carroll pre-emptively addresses the question she knows she'll be asked: "*Why haven't I 'come forward' before now?* Receiving death threats, being driven from my home, being dismissed, being dragged through the mud, and joining the 15 women who've come forward with credible stories about how the man grabbed, badgered, belittled, mauled, molested and assaulted them, only to see the man turn it around, deny, threaten and attack them, never sounded like much fun. Also, I am a coward."

Or as Ford put it to the Washington *Post,* describing her hesitation about attaching her name to her allegation, "Why suffer through the annihilation if it's not going to matter?"

IN *OF WOMAN BORN,* published in 1976, Adrienne Rich wrote, "I believe increasingly that only the willingness to share private and sometimes painful experience can enable women to create a collective description of the world which will be truly ours." Rich, too, shouted her pain and fear and truth to a political system that didn't seem to listen. But it wasn't for them that she wrote her words, but for a group of women tired and longing.

Renee Bracey Sherman, senior public-affairs manager of the National Network of Abortion Funds, has been talking about her abortion for years. And although she thinks stories do make a difference—she points to Congressman Tim Ryan, who told her he became pro-choice after hearing women's stories—she also believes that expecting personal stories to change a political system fueled by "patriarchy, racism, xenophobia and misogyny" is a lot of work to put on people who have had abortions. For this reason, she says, policy change cannot be the only goal.

"It is for ourselves and for us to feel like we're not alone and then that becomes the catalyst that more people share their stories. And then people realize, everyone loves someone who's had an abortion, and they recognize who in their family or friend circle has had an abortion. And that's kind of my theory on change of how this all works," she says. "I do this work unapologetically for people who have had abortions, particularly people of color who have had abortions, so that they can see themselves represented in the conversation."

EVERY ERA IS DEFINED BY THE COLLECTIVE CRY OF THOSE DENIED THEIR HUMANITY, BY THE SHOUTS OF THOSE WHO HAVE TO FIGHT TO BE SEEN

In the face of so many setbacks, it helps to think of it that way. Our fight, our sharing, our vulnerability is ultimately to create space for others to be heard. Progress is not always linear, and if our outpouring doesn't yield immediate political success, that doesn't mean it's a failure.

And yet what woman isn't sick of this? While it's true that women swept into elected office in record numbers after both the Hill and Ford testimonies, it still often feels like we're shouting into the void. During the confirmation process, one of Kavanaugh's Yale classmates, Deborah Ramirez, had come forward, claiming that he had thrust his penis at her during a party. In September, New York *Times* reporters Kate Kelly and Robin Pogrebin (Letty Pogrebin's daughter) wrote in a new book about Kavanaugh that even fellow Yale graduates who tried to contact the FBI and corroborate Ramirez's claim were not interviewed by investigators. (Kavanaugh has denied the allegation.)

It's 2019 and we're closer than ever to losing our constitutional right to decide when and if we become mothers. Bad man after bad man plots his return to society, having faced just a short time hiding out in a vacation home somewhere. The President, who has been accused of sexual misconduct by more than a dozen women, still sits in the White House, still overseeing a political system, still nominating judges to lifetime roles, stripping away our control of our own bodies. He's denied all the allegations, and the nation, by and large, has shrugged them off too. But somehow there's a narrative that all this #MeToo stuff has gone too far.

Since the beginnings of ancient democracy, women's voices have been sidelined. If we've wanted those in the halls of power to consider our experiences, it's been up to us to make them known. But I wonder what would happen if we didn't have to constantly insist on being heard and insist on our humanity. What would it look like to live in a world where instead of forcing the elevator doors open, we were allowed in? I'm almost too exhausted to imagine.

Lenz is the author of God Land: A Story of Faith, Loss and Renewal in Middle America

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Time Off

FALL BACK
In a new network season largely devoid of inspiration, only a couple of shows stand out

INSIDE

BRAD PITT GETS LOST, AND FOUND, IN SPACE

DOWNTON ABBEY *MOVES TO THE BIG SCREEN*

JACQUELINE WOODSON'S COMPACT FAMILY EPIC

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY JESSE LENZ FOR TIME

TELEVISION

What's left to watch on network TV?

By Judy Berman

SOMETHING UNUSUAL HAPPENED AT THIS summer's Television Critics Association press tour, an event where networks hype their upcoming slates to the media. During Fox's presentation, journalists voiced concerns about *Almost Family,* a new drama that recalls several real cases of fertility fraud. The show opens with the revelation that a doctor (Timothy Hutton) has inseminated dozens of women with his own sperm, without their knowledge. Critics who had seen the show detected an incongruously breezy tone for a story of what several described as a medical rape. Seemingly caught off guard, creators Jason Katims and Annie Weisman promised to address Hutton's character. But they also insisted his actions were beside the point; the salient theme, they said, was family.

I don't think the show's creators intended to make light of rape. Yet at a time when such story lines invite close scrutiny—and for good reason—Fox's apparent failure to foresee a backlash comes off as bafflingly clueless. It all felt emblematic of a more general sense, in recent years, that broadcast networks have grown out of touch.

Network prime-time ratings have been plummeting for quite a while. In the 2000s, cable channels started pouring money into the kind of original scripted comedies and dramas that broadcast networks largely abandoned when the reality-TV craze hit. More recently, juggernauts like *Game of Thrones* and *The Walking Dead* have beaten out dozens of network series as two of the most-watched scripted shows among viewers ages 18 to 49; in that demographic last year, *Thrones* outperformed even football.

Though streaming viewership is harder to measure, there's plenty of data to support the conclusion that streaming is younger viewers' medium of choice. In January, *Ad Age* reported that ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox had seen a 27% drop since 2016 in "demographically desirable" adults 18 to 49. Lots of millennials, who now dominate that demographic, wait to binge full seasons of prime-time fare on Netflix—which, not coincidentally, has been poaching star network creators like Ryan Murphy, Shonda Rhimes and Kenya Barris. So, as TV grows more creative and diverse in the aggregate, the networks that built the medium look more like anachronisms every year.

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE a crop of new scripted series less inspired than the class of 2019. Which is not to say that every show—yes, I screened all 16—is bad. I'll be watching *Nancy Drew,* an extremely CW take on the girl-detective books. Unmoored in the wake of her mom's death, this present-day Nancy (Kennedy McMann, whose messy charm reminds me of Greta Gerwig) has quit crime solving and skipped college to sling seafood in her Maine hometown. Of course, it doesn't take long for a murder to get her back to sleuthing. Like *Veronica Mars* meets *Riverdale,* with many intriguing mini-mysteries, the show is pure fun.

Bless the Harts, Fox's latest animated family sitcom, also has potential. Set in small-town North Carolina and centered on the white working-class Hart clan, it's sure to invite *King of the Hill* comparisons. But creator Emily Spivey (of Fox's wonderfully odd *The Last Man on Earth*) and some stellar voice actors reinvigorate the concept with fresh cultural references, fantastical touches and a female-led cast of characters: Jenny (Kristen Wiig), a waitress who chats with Jesus (Kumail Nanjiani); her artsy alternateen daughter Violet (Jillian Bell); shady matriarch Betty (Maya Rudolph); and Jenny's muscle-bound boyfriend Wayne (Ike Barinholtz), a supportive surrogate dad.

A few other new series deserve the benefit of the doubt, despite uneven pilots, based on the personnel involved: ABC's *mixed-ish* is a sweet '80s-set prequel to Barris' *black-ish* that finds a young Rainbow Johnson (Arica Himmel) acclimating to the suburbs after growing up on a commune. NBC's *Sunnyside* stars co-creator Kal Penn as a disgraced Queens politician whose encounter with a group of immigrants offers a chance at redemption. Thrilling action scenes and the tantalizing potential of Cobie Smulders as a PI bode well for ABC's *Stumptown. The Unicorn,* a CBS sitcom in which Walton Goggins' widower status makes him a hot commodity on dating apps, rounds out its cast with comedy standbys

The top 3 shows to watch right now

Network TV isn't exactly a fount of great programming. But here are this season's best bets:

NANCY DREW
The CW's dark, contemporary take on the classic children's books could be the next *Riverdale.*

Michaela Watkins and Rob Corddry. (In another telling network gaffe, CBS failed to realize—or didn't care—that *unicorn* was already Tinder slang for a queer person who dates couples.)

Inevitably, there are catastrophes. A *Pitch Perfect* rip-off down to the presence of Anna Camp, NBC's *Perfect Harmony* casts Bradley Whitford as a gloomy music professor who leads a rural church choir after his wife dies and he gets canned from Princeton. *Bob Hearts Abishola,* on CBS, finds time between fart jokes to marvel at the apparent unlikeliness of a folksy white socks mogul (Billy Gardell) falling for his Nigerian nurse (Folake Olowofoyeku). Also from CBS, *Carol's Second Act* has Patricia Heaton showing up stock coddled-millennial characters as the oldest doctor in her intern cohort. As a *Hannibal* fan, I can't abide Fox's *Prodigal Son*—another show, this one all expository dialogue, about the bond between a bookish serial killer and a fragile profiler. This time, they're father and son.

IT'S NOT SHOCKING that many of these shows center on bad dads or disgraced male authority figures. Along with a heightened interest in immigrant stories, this microtrend feels like a way of commenting on current events in America—where, as a character on the aggressively generic NBC legal drama *Bluff City Law* laments, "values like fairness and decency are vanishing before our very eyes"—without alienating anyone. After last year's surprise standout *God Friended Me,* supernatural procedurals are still in (see: *Evil,* a goofy CBS drama about a psychologist and a priest who investigate crimes, from *Good Wife* creators Robert and Michelle King). Networks are casting diverse ensembles, but actors of color mostly take a back seat to white leads.

As TV grows more creative and diverse in the aggregate, the networks that built the medium look more like anachronisms

Yet what unites network schedules this fall, more than anything, is a dearth of original concepts. Every single new drama concerns either crime or medicine. A charismatic queer protagonist (Ruby Rose) fails to liberate *Batwoman,* which joins *Supergirl* on the CW, from superhero boilerplate. The CBS judge show *All Rise* is the bland female-empowerment narrative you get when you try to make a Shonda show without Shonda.

Meanwhile, a few apparent attempts to keep up with high-concept cable and streaming fare come across as weak mimicry. Allison Tolman is great in ABC's mysterious sci-fi drama *Emergence,* but she's playing essentially the same good-cop character she played on FX's *Fargo.* The controversial *Almost Family* seems to be aiming for Ryan Murphy's signature mix of glib humor and sincere warmth; in the pilot, Katims and Weisman can't decide whether to frame accidental incest as traumatic or darkly funny. (To be fair, Murphy doesn't always nail it, either.)

THE SAD STATE of network TV may not be surprising anymore, but it remains disappointing, like a high school student with potential who squeaks by with D's. As cable and streaming expand the possibilities of television as art with ambitious new creators and series—like *Russian Doll, Fleabag* and *Atlanta*—it's frustrating to see broadcasters squander their theoretical reach on the same doctor and lawyer shows. Could this truly be what networks think people want? And if not, shouldn't they be trying harder to save themselves? Aren't they worried to see Netflix crash premiere season with buzzy debuts like *Unbelievable,* Murphy's *The Politician* and *Rhythm + Flow,* a hip-hop competition judged by Cardi B, Chance the Rapper and T.I.? Or do they feel stymied by cautious advertisers—a headache streaming services and premium cable don't have? Is this really the best the Big 5 can do?

Their attention appears to be elsewhere. By all appearances, the conglomerates behind the networks have shifted their efforts to building a postbroadcast future. ABC parent Disney recently acquired cable maverick FX and plans to launch its Disney+ streaming service in November. CBS has been saving its best properties (Jordan Peele's *Twilight Zone, The Good Fight*) for CBS All Access. And WarnerMedia is giving the shows it produces for the CW (which it co-owns with CBS) a new streaming home on its very own HBO Max hub, set to launch in 2020.

Broadcast TV may not be in danger of disappearing overnight. It's still the home of sports, talk shows and newsrooms that anchor multiplatform journalism operations. We still get a new breakout hit, like *This Is Us* or *The Masked Singer,* every year or two. But as ratings keep declining, audiences keep aging and risk-averse execs keep greenlighting formulaic shows, network prime time seems caught in a long slow death spiral. Flipping from NBC to ABC to CBS to Fox to the CW on a weeknight can feel a bit like wandering through a ghost mall. The physical structure of a once vital marketplace remains, but there's just so little left to buy. ☐

STUMPTOWN
ABC adapts a beloved indie comic built around the compellingly flawed female PI Dex Parios—and has the good sense to cast Cobie Smulders, Michael Ealy *(left)* and Jake Johnson.

BLESS THE HARTS
Creator Emily Spivey has described her Fox cartoon as "a *King of the Hill*–type show, but set in North Carolina with female leads." Sold.

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATIONS BY JESSE LENZ FOR TIME; COURTESY NETWORKS; TREES: GETTY IMAGES

Cohn: brilliant and unethical

DOCUMENTARY

There was a crooked man

A rabidly anti-communist lawyer who helped engineer the McCarthy hearings, a bulldog attorney for clients including Mafia thugs and Donald Trump, a closeted gay man who used his influence to obtain the experimental AIDS treatment he needed in the 1980s, even as he chummed around with—and made money off—individuals who'd do anything to keep those drugs from the masses who needed them: that was Roy Cohn, the subject of Matt Tyrnauer's raggedly shaped but informative documentary *Where's My Roy Cohn?*

The title is a direct quote from our 45th President, who in early 2018 lamented that he didn't have the right associates to protect him from the Russia investigation. It's no secret that Cohn has always been Trump's dream lawyer, and Tyrnauer's documentary convincingly presents him as a kingmaker who would stop at nothing to exonerate, and even elevate, his most knavish clients. Unfortunately, Cohn—who died in 1986, just weeks after he'd been disbarred for a host of ethical violations—was also brilliant. And though he never fulfilled his youthful dream of holding political office, *Where's My Roy Cohn?* makes the case that his smeary fingerprints are all over the political landscape today. —*S.Z.*

MOVIES

In space, man's search for meaning

JAMES GRAY'S STRANGE, HYPNOTIC space adventure *Ad Astra* is set in the near future, when humanity has decided to look to the stars for intelligent life, evidently finding the cupboards bare at home. To reveal whether or not that life is found would give away too much, and it would be missing the point, anyway: this story is as much about the alien life inside us as it is about space exploration. Sometimes our feelings can be like foreign invaders, unwelcome in the narrative we're trying to write for ourselves.

That's certainly true of *Ad Astra*'s hero, stoic astronaut Roy McBride, played by Brad Pitt. Roy is descended from spaceman royalty: his father Clifford (Tommy Lee Jones) was part of the first team to make it to Neptune, and when Roy was just a kid, he died there—or at least that's what the U.S. government suggested to Roy and his mother, leaving them to feel bereft and abandoned. Roy strives to be the best astronaut he can be, carrying off even the most nerve-jangling tasks with aplomb. It's his own feelings, particularly toward his father, he can't handle. His existential torment intensifies when the government taps him for a mission that's both dangerous and emotionally complex: Clifford, it turns out, may not be dead after all, and it's Roy's job to locate him somewhere out there in the inky blackness of space.

At times, *Ad Astra* is way too obvious about its aims, reflected in Roy's riffs about how little he needs other human beings, on this planet or any other. But the movie's power sneaks up on you. Nearly every minute is gorgeous to look at: Gray and his cinematographer, Hoyte Van Hoytema, used Kodak images from Apollo missions 11 through 17 as inspiration—the movie's visuals are halfway between dreams of space and the silvery, shivery majesty of the real thing. And Pitt makes Roy's particular brand of self-torture effortlessly believable. Pitt seems to be growing more weathered, and more beautiful, with each role, and Gray and Van Hoytema make the most of that beauty, bringing the camera in close to survey his cheekbone contours, his haunted-lake eyes, the vegetation of his blondish beard whiskers, as if they were mapping the geography of a new planet. He survives the scrutiny, and he helps guide *Ad Astra* to a landing you don't quite expect, a place of self-forgiveness that feels earned. —S.Z.

Pitt can handle outer space, but not his own feelings, in Ad Astra

Carmichael, Elizabeth McGovern and Dockery return for a new chapter in their popular period drama

MOVIES

A *Downton Abbey* that fills the big screen

By Stephanie Zacharek

AS A PERSON WHO HAS SEEN BARELY A FLICKER OF *Downton Abbey* on television, I can't predict whether the movie spin-off—directed by Michael Engler and written by the show's creator, Julian Fellowes—will be everything longtime fans have hoped for. But as a one-off, it's a featherweight delight, like the prettiest pink-and-white cake on the tea tray.

It's 1927, and the denizens of Downton are in a tizzy: King George and Queen Mary are planning a trip through Yorkshire, and they'll be stopping off for one night at the estate. They're bringing all their own servants, which upsets the Downton staff, presided over by the ever-sensible Mr. Carson and Mrs. Hughes (Jim Carter and Phyllis Logan). But the impending visit sets off china-rattling reverberations throughout the rest of the household, too: Lady Mary Talbot (Michelle Dockery), now in charge of managing the house, worries that everything will go wrong, and Lady Edith (Laura Carmichael), now happily married, has her own unexpected development to contend with. Meanwhile, peppery Dowager Countess Violet Crawley (Maggie Smith) squares off against a long-lost and equally stubborn relative, Lady Bagshaw (Imelda Staunton); sweet, dithery Isobel Grey (Penelope Wilton) ends up running interference.

Intrigue, romantic travails and plain old stress rule the day, both upstairs and downstairs, and Fellowes and Engler keep all the gears running smoothly. But come now—you really came here to find out about the gowns and the jewels, didn't you? Liquid-velvet day dresses in period-perfect shades of burnt coral and tobacco, ropes of Venetian glass beads in undersea-fantasia colors, a faintworthy deep-blue Fortuny pleated evening gown: the costumes, by Anna Robbins, are spectacular. You wouldn't really want to be a member of the aristocracy—it's a lot of bother. But gazing at these lives from afar is a gentle pleasure, and one you shouldn't feel guilty about. ◻

WHERE'S MY ROY COHN?: SONY CLASSICS; AD ASTRA: 20TH CENTURY FOX; DOWNTON ABBEY: FOCUS FEATURES

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What do the Settlements provide?

This is the fourth group of Settlements for this case. The combined total Settlement Fund is over $1.2 billion. The Settlement Funds (minus expenses, attorney fees, incentive awards, and other costs) will be used to pay consumers and businesses who bought/leased certain new vehicles or bought certain replacement parts while living in 30 states and the District of Columbia. The Settlements also include cooperation and agreements by certain Settling Defendants not to engage in certain conduct for a period of 24 months.

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FICTION

A family grows in Brooklyn

By Joshunda Sanders

Woodson follows Another Brooklyn, *the 2016 novel that was her first in two decades written for adult readers, with a compact family epic*

A TREASURE AWAITS READERS WHO ENCOUNTER *Red at the Bone,* who descend the staircase with a loose step as 16-year-old Melody does in her coming-of-age party at the start of the novel. Jacqueline Woodson's latest book for adults looks at a middle-class black family in Brooklyn and the struggles and triumphs that brought them to this moment, celebrating the daughter who was the unexpected product of a teenage romance. The novel is both a uniquely black story about multigenerational love and upward mobility—and a universal American tale of striving, failing, then trying again.

Woodson, internationally renowned for her work for young readers, has published more than 30 books over as many years. In 2014, she won a National Book Award for *Brown Girl Dreaming,* a middle-grade memoir in verse. In *Red at the Bone,* the author refines the talent for finding precise language to describe overwhelm and passion, confusion and potential she exhibited in that memoir. In about 200 pages, we are met with Woodson's vast range, insight and tenderness, particularly in her treatment of young people carrying the weight of old souls.

TEEN PREGNANCY is often treated like a tragedy in narratives of black life, but the lens here is more realistic: life goes on. Melody spends her formative years with her father Aubrey and her maternal grandmother Sabe while her mother Iris heads off to college as planned.

At Oberlin, away from the watchful eye of her parents and her new family, Iris falls for someone, a sexy and smart young woman who stirs her more than any man ever has. It's fitting then that the title of the novel references that raw desire we all have to claim the people and things we most want in life. When Iris imagines the object of her passion being with another woman, Woodson describes her jealousy in bracing terms: "She had to take slow breaths to calm herself down. She felt red at the bone—like there was something inside of her undone and bleeding."

Love, whether requited or not, can be a killer. And the pangs of love, in its many forms, reverberate through Woodson's pages, which hit close to the marrow of old Brooklyn, with brown girls and boys, dreaming; their parents and grandparents, too, wishing for peace, to be settled.

The chapters in *Red at the Bone* shift back and forth in time, giving each character a chance to narrate and moving seamlessly between their distinct histories. Po'Boy, the patriarch, was a Morehouse man; Sabe attended Spelman. Aubrey is content to work in the mail room at the World Trade Center. Grandmother and granddaughter are each, in her own right, the culmination of otherwise deferred dreams. They both present an opportunity to get things right after generations of lives pushed off track: Sabe in her stories of overcoming the terrors of the Tulsa, Okla., race riots, Melody as she dons the dress her mother was meant to wear to her own coming-of-age ceremony, one that never happened. Woodson evokes black formalism, a post-Reconstruction movement meant to highlight black dignity through dress, style and traditions performed beyond the white gaze, to depict an aspirational American family surviving the troubles they meet.

And while not a particularly sympathetic character, Iris represents that resilience. Her narration reminds us of just how young she and Aubrey were when they made the choices that set the course of their lives. Running through the novel is the realization that all stages of life have disruptions that will ripple on the surface and also below: at eye level here are the unresolved tensions coloring Melody's ceremony, while beneath them are the unplanned events that have changed not just her life, but everyone's. In telling this story, Woodson sees to it that we remember that in spite of our circumstances, for good or for bad, we go on. □

YOUNG ADULT

A grownup teenage rom-com

Frank Li's lies are catching up with him. In David Yoon's eagerly anticipated debut, *Frankly in Love,* the high school senior has fallen hard for a girl in his calculus class. Frank has never had a girlfriend before, but there's a bigger challenge at hand: Brit is white, and Frank's Korean immigrant parents expect him to date someone who looks like him.

So, as the protagonist of a YA rom-com does, Frank decides to appease his parents by pretending to date a Korean-American friend who is stuck in a similar situation. The fake lovers sync up their calendars and tell their families they're out together while secretly meeting their actual love interests. It's a familiar setup, but Yoon's writing shines when the teens' plan inevitably starts to unravel and Frank faces grownup questions about identity.

Buzz is building for Yoon, who is married to popular YA author Nicola Yoon *(The Sun Is Also a Star). Frankly in Love* was the subject of a bidding war between 10 publishers, and the film rights to the book were snapped up a year before its release. Yoon's fresh and nuanced approach to Frank's struggle to navigate cultural tensions amplifies both the vulnerabilities and the strengths that can come with being a child of immigrants. As Frank learns to balance his parents' desires with his own, Yoon underscores the value of honoring both who you are and where you come from. *—A.G.*

PRESCOTT: TREVOR PAULHUS

FICTION

The secret (agents) behind the story

By Annabel Gutterman

IN 1957, BORIS PASTERNAK's *Doctor Zhivago,* an epic love story set against the backdrop of the Russian Revolution, was published in Italy. The book, which chronicled a forbidden romance between a physician and his mistress, was banned in the Soviet Union for its anti-communist messages. But in an effort to undermine the revolution, American CIA agents worked to ensure the novel was brought back to its homeland.

Lara Prescott's debut, *The Secrets We Kept,* reimagines *Doctor Zhivago*'s dangerous journey to publication, placing women serving as CIA secretaries at the center of the story. The novel closely follows three perspectives: Olga, Pasternak's real-life mistress, on whom he based the fictional Lara (who in turn inspired Prescott's first name); Irina, a new secretary being groomed to go undercover; and Sally, the glamorous agent training her. But there's a fourth entity that takes on a crucial perspective in the novel: a Greek chorus of secretaries in the typing pool, at first unaware that a few among them are doing spy work. *The Secrets We Kept* opens in the secretaries' collective voice, as they reflect on their ability to remain tight-lipped about what they observe at the office: "Unlike some of the men, we could keep our secrets."

The novel flips between Irina and Sally's adventures with Washington elites and Olga's bleak days in the gulag where she's serving time for her involvement with the book.

'Unlike some of the men, we could keep our secrets.'

THE SECRETS WE KEPT

Prescott, who has a background working for political campaigns, showcases a talent at blending thorough research—she used Olga Ivinskaya's biographies to inform the character—with energetic prose. Her writing is propulsive when she describes the high-stakes handling of the controversial book. (At one point, Irina dresses as a nun and hands out disguised copies at the Vatican.)

When Irina and Sally's covert mission spirals into something more, the other secretaries begin to catch on. But where some writers might endow those onlookers with envy or suspicion, Prescott instead paints the group as nosy but caring, curious but protective, all-knowing but discreet. And by allowing them to address the reader and assert their point of view—in a time and place where only men's voices are heeded—Prescott puts the power in the women's hands. ◻

Reporting from The Zhivago Affair *(2014) inspired Prescott*

The apple event of the year

By Mahita Gajanan

BRUCE BARRITT SAW THE DILEMMA coming more than 30 years ago. Washington State's apple growers were fixated on a single species, the Red Delicious, which made up 70% of the state's apple production in 1988. But like a prudent investor, Barritt knew the importance of the mix in a portfolio, as well as in metaphors. "I just felt like they put all their eggs in one basket," he says. "That cash cow wasn't going to last forever." He was right: production of the Red Delicious, which critics say is always red but rarely delicious, fell 11% from 2017 to 2018, according to the U.S. Apple Association.

Barritt advocated for the state to look beyond its star product—a task akin to talking the capital-A Apple into moving past the iPhone. But in 1994, Washington State University (WSU) began a breeding program led by Barritt, and his team set off on a quest to build a better apple.

Decades later, the fruit of their labors is ready for picking: apple variety WA38, better known as the Cosmic Crisp, thanks to a starry pattern on its skin formed by small pores called lenticels. To hear Barritt describe the Cosmic Crisp is to hear an artist who's clearly proud of his work.

"It's when you get your teeth into the apple and you try to pull away and hear a cracking sound—an acoustic characteristic," he says, describing what makes an ideal apple. Texture and moisture are also key—you want a firm, crisp apple with a juiciness that renders the experience of eating it "very pleasant." Barritt believes Cosmic Crisp is a triple threat. "There just isn't another variety that has all three of those things at once," he says.

Funded by WSU and Washington apple growers, Barritt's team spent years producing thousands of hybrid seeds, then sampling the resulting apples. "Less than 1% are any good," Barritt says. "But one or two will be, and that's how you come up with the Cosmic Crisp." In 1997, the team made a cross of Honeycrisp and Enterprise apples that resulted in what they were looking for. About five years later, they saw the fruit that would become the Cosmic Crisp. Twelve million Cosmic Crisp trees have since been planted, and 18 million pounds of the apples are set to ship across the country in December alone.

THIS APPLE COULD BE a "game changer" for the industry, says Robert Crassweller, a horticulture professor at Penn State University. "This is the first time anyone has made such a concerted effort to develop a variety, release it and commit to such a large quantity," he says. "Usually an apple comes along and gradually builds up in the market."

The Cosmic Crisp could be a lifesaver for Washington apple growers in particular. Unlike Gala and Fuji apples, which were developed outside of the U.S., the Cosmic Crisp was designed specifically to excel in Washington State's climate, says Kate Evans, who took over the WSU program after Barritt retired in 2008. Washington apple growers will have exclusive rights to the Cosmic Crisp for 10 years.

Barritt is bullish on the Cosmic Crisp's commercial prospects. Flavor and texture aside, it's also resilient, able to stay in good shape for up to 12 months after being harvested and put into storage. That might make it popular with shoppers sick of throwing away uneaten fruit.

Indeed, a sample of Cosmic Crisp apples sent to TIME was harvested last year and put into cold storage in March. A few were bruised, but they were crisp and flavorful. And while they taste similar to other sweet apples, the flesh breaks away cleanly and requires little chewing before breaking down into a pleasant, juicy experience.

The Cosmic Crisp will have plenty of competition. Other new apple varieties, like the Ludacrisp and Summerset, are also on the way. But the WSU team isn't done. An entirely new line of apples is in what Evans calls the "advanced selection phase," with consumer testing to begin next spring. "The breeding program didn't stop after we did the crossing in 1997," she says. "It's a conveyor belt of stuff moving forward." □

The Cosmic Crisp took two decades to develop from start to finish. "It's biology, basically," says Barritt

KIM BUBELLO FOR TIME

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7 Questions

Renée Zellweger The Oscar-winning actor on playing Judy Garland, how *Bridget Jones* holds up and the public scrutiny of women

You spent two years preparing for the film *Judy*. What stood out as the most important thing to capture about Judy Garland? What struck me was, despite the tragic circumstances and how they were portrayed on the public record, she never stopped hoping. She was a joyful person. She didn't strike me as a tragic figure at all. She seemed heroic in her determination to carry on and her belief that things would get better.

In the film, her fans feel they know her, but she doesn't appear to feel known by them. Is there a certain loneliness that comes with fame? I'm sure it's different for everybody. I suppose it depends on how much of your public persona and professional responsibilities consume your time vs. how much time you spend focusing on the person behind the public persona.

Is it different preparing to play a real person? Absolutely, because there are parameters that are the historical record. But having an experience with that myself, and being the subject of certain reporting, I try to be judicious in looking at it and consider the source and remember that whatever is out there is always through [the lens of] someone's personal agenda or their own damage.

She once called herself "the queen of the comeback"— *[Paraphrasing Garland]* She can't go to the bathroom without them calling it a comeback!

There's a narrative around the movie that it's a comeback for you, just a few years after you returned from a six-year hiatus from acting. How does that word sit with you? I don't think about that kind of stuff. However people interpret things, it's none of my business. I don't read things. I'm not on social media.

'THERE WILL BE AN AUDIENCE FOR STORIES ABOUT WOMEN OF EVERY AGE IF SOMEONE CREATES THEM'

GETTY IMAGES

Your break coincided with an age when many women find that juicy roles start to dry up. Do you feel like you skipped that period? Maybe. Or maybe the industry changed and there are more outlets for material. There will be an audience for stories about women of every age if someone creates them. There's always been an audience for different kinds of material, it's just limited in terms of what the business model seemed to allow. So as that's changing, the range of stories is expanding. *Escape at Dannemora* and Patricia Arquette out there doing her thing, Patricia Clarkson doing her thing, Julia Roberts doing her thing, the list goes on.

I rewatched *Bridget Jones's Diary* recently. It's different watching Bridget's flirtations with her boss, Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant), in the #MeToo era. Is it fair to judge past movies through the lens of today? I can't remember how much of it they were trying to conceal, because it was taboo. It wasn't something they were trying to advertise. Maybe there are just different consequences hanging in the balance in 2019.

In 2016 you wrote an op-ed criticizing tabloid scrutiny of women's bodies, including your own. Has anything changed since then? That's a big question. I think there's a consciousness about it that might be a little bit different. What do you think?

We have a long way to go. Maybe. But these are institutionalized, social behaviors that are reinforced through generations. So inevitably it's going to change if you have women raise their children with an expectation that they be treated differently. As we go forward and we make certain realizations about the way we conduct ourselves in society, then the change comes. But I expect that it will take a minute. —ELIZA BERMAN

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